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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF BLACK FIFTH GRADE STUDENTS'
PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL STUDIES AND A DISCUSSION WITH SECONDARY
STUDENTS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the College of Education and Human Performance
at the University of Central Florida
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ABSTRACT

The problem I address in this study is the lack of Black elementary students' knowledge and interest of the social studies content. Black students who lack a true identity of self, fail to develop into productive citizens. Although previous studies have examined Black students' experiences in secondary social studies classrooms, few have thoroughly examined Black students' experiences in the elementary classrooms. For this study, I analyze Black fifth grade students' perceptions of the social studies content.

Identifying these perceptions is imperative so educators can adjust their pedagogical practices based on what they deem as important for educational growth, and the experiences of Black students. Allowing Black students to share their experiences and express their thoughts is conducive to their knowledge and awareness of the subject (Scott, 2017). To grasp an authentic analysis of student understanding educators must start in the primary grades. Previous research highlights that curriculum and instruction fails to align with what students, especially Black students need to be successful in the classroom. Identifying these areas in elementary school will create a smooth transition for students as they advance to the next level.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

African Americans or Blacks are more likely to be the role models that Black students wish to emulate (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009). Examples include people such as Oprah Winfrey, Michelle Obama, and LeBron James. Whereas the aforementioned are commonly used names, bass singer and actor Paul Robeson is a historical figure (Zien, 2013) rarely referenced in social studies textbooks (Apple, 2013). This is just one example of the various Black educators, athletes, and medical practitioners who remain silenced in history textbooks (Dorman, Aldridge, & Fraser, 2006). Creating safe spaces, and integrating multiple perspectives content representative of everyone will prompt Black students to maintain positive perceptions of social studies (Morgan, 2009). Furthermore, it is necessary that educators discuss complex topics such as race and race relations in the social studies classroom (Kernahan & Davis, 2007).

Race has permeated the views, actions, and outcomes of American society (Nowrouzi, Faghfori, & Zohdi, 2015). The presence of racism dates as early as colonial America (Richardson, 2011). African Americans were denied the basic necessities and liberties of everyday life such as freedom of speech, the right to vote, and the right to a fair trial just to name a few (Johnson & Stanford, 2002). Even today, compared to their Caucasian counterparts, African Americans are stripped of the equal rights and privileges when it comes to housing, education, and politics (Wood, 2014; Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Dye, 1969). Moreover, African American communities throughout the country are witnessing an influx of homicides against unarmed Blacks (Gruber, 2014). Black youth in urban neighborhoods are likely to witness more shootings and stabbings causing them to be at a greater risk for traumatic exposure (Smith & Patton, 2016). After engaging in these critical conversations in the social studies classrooms, a

follow up exercise of role-play, discussing alternative solutions, and identifying ways to become actively involved citizens against injustices are all beneficial for students (Griffin, Cunningham, & Mwangi, 2016).

It would be naïve to think students' perceptions of social studies is merely from pedagogical practices. While the crux of this study will emphasize how the social studies curriculum takes precedence over other influential factors, the students' cultural background and neighborhood also influences their perceptions (Winfield, 1994). The students' family and community members may yield positive and/or negative perceptions regarding school-related content (Carey, 2017). The socioeconomic status and cultural background directly correlates with student achievement in the classroom (Reardon, 2011; Gipps, 1999). Family, friends, and community leaders affect the way in which students view topics such as politics, religion, and education (Sonnenschein & Galindo, 2015). Furthermore, Black students' association with positive individuals such as friends, mentors, and role models exhibits strong prosocial competence (Cigala, Mori, & Fangareggi, 2015). Yet, the social studies curriculum, and the pedagogic content knowledge, may also influence their perceptions (Polite & Saenger, 2003).

From its inception, social studies primarily focused on civic education (Smith, Palmer, & Correia, 1995). Specifically, the Committee on Social Studies (CSS), was a subcommittee of the Commission for the Reorganization of Secondary Education. The Committee on Social Studies suggested that high school social studies educators teach students good citizenship in "his" city, state, and nation. Although civic education is an essential component of social studies, the committee neglected to mention the other components of social education (Adler & Goodman, 1986). The creators of the CSS report were middle class bureaucrats whose primary aims were to develop an American democratic educational system which targeted social concerns of

wartime mobilization, the large influx of immigration, restructuring of municipalities, and social efficacy (Fallace, 2009).

Although the field of social studies has evolved over the years, the curriculum has failed to include multiple perspectives (Jordan, Brown, & Gutierrez, 2010). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), Black students ages 5-17 account for the third largest race/ethnicity group; therefore, it is necessary for them to experience reading selections and classroom activities from a multiple perspectives viewpoint (Chikkatur, 2013). Including multiple perspectives will alleviate feelings of not belonging in the classroom and in society (Banks, 1998). When students take pride in who they are (Clark & Clark, 1950) and their ancestral past (Dagbovie, 2006), the likelihood of them maturing into successful adults is more likely (O'Neil, Guloy, & Sensoy, 2014). Moreover, students who undergo positive experiences in social studies will likely participate in the most basic of the American democratic process, the right to vote (Haas, 2004). To create positive Black student perceptions in the social studies classroom, it is necessary to first identify the issue and then establish solutions to remedy the problem (Durden, 2007).

Statement of Problem

The problem I address in this study is the lack of Black elementary students' knowledge and interest of social studies content. Black students who lack a true identity of self, fail to develop into productive citizens (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Although previous studies have examined Black students' experiences in secondary social studies classrooms (Harrell-Levy, Kerpelman, & Henry, 2016), they have not thoroughly examined Black students' experiences in the elementary social studies classrooms. To identify adequate yearly progress

(AYP), President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001 (Pederson, 2007). The purpose of NCLB was to proliferate academic standards and measure educational goals by holding schools accountable for student performance in grades K-12 (Bogin, 2014). While the implementation of NCLB may have improved assessment scores for other racial groups, such as Whites, Black students' have consistently scored lower on these exams (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Thus, NCLB has failed to provide a quality education for Black students (Thompson & Allen, 2012). Perhaps the test questions are not designed to reflect the real-world experiences of Black students (Fitchett & Heafner, 2013; Wiggins, 1989). It is crucial that social studies educators integrate lessons on lived experiences that will allow Black students to identify with those whom they resemble (Vickery, 2016; Dilworth, 2004). One method for integrating lived experiences is the utilization of Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW).

Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW) applies knowledge and skills to original work opposed to simply memorizing facts and dates (King, Newmann, & Carmichael 2009). The requisite for AIW is to connect personal experiences with historical events. For example, students creating projects about Black soldiers allows them to research and learn about individuals who served the country (Newmann, Bryk, & Nagaoka, 2001). Another example of students utilizing AIW involves opinion poll surveys concerning the views of local, state, and national governmental issues. Authentic Intellectual Work utilizes skills that go beyond textbook examples (Archbald & Newmann, 1988). At-risk or minority students benefit the most from a variety of cognitive activities imbedded in the classroom which allows them to use skills such as critical thinking (Fuchs, Fuchs, Compton, Powell, Seethaler, Capizzi, Schatschneider, & Fletcher, 2006). Authentic Intellectual Work is merely one teaching method used to increase Black students' favorable perceptions of social studies.

Educators are failing to implement a variety of teaching methods such as AIW (Avery, 1999). It appears as though standardized testing is compartmentalizing students, which prevents them from engaging in critical and creative thinking (Anderson, 2009). This stagnates students' desire to learn social studies and hinders positive experiences (Hall & Carter, 2006). Social studies textbooks inaccurately represent the history of Blacks, thus Black students' social experiences are affected (Woodson, 2015; Brown & Brown, 2010). It is pertinent for Black students to develop socially to meet the global demands of this world (Banks, 2008; Chong & Kim, 2006). Critical discourse in the social studies classroom correlates to success in school overall (Huang, 2015). The social studies classroom is unparalleled to other disciplines as it teaches students to make informed decisions concerning the democratic process and it incorporates ways of becoming a productive citizen in society (Banks, 2001). To foster these successes, educators must integrate multiple perspectives on historical content to encourage students' interest to create positive experiences in their social studies classrooms (Marcus & Stoddard, 2009), thus, it is necessary to begin teaching from a multiple perspectives viewpoint beginning in kindergarten (Morgan, 2009; Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005). Students who learn morals and values in the primary grades will develop academically, and those transferable skills will be applied as they progress through each grade level (Bingham, Holbrook, & Meyers, 2010).

Rationale for the study

For this study, I analyzed elementary aged Black students' perceptions of the social studies content. There is a disparity among Black students' assessment scores on the high school U.S. History Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) End-of-Course (EOC) assessment in social studies (Education Commission of the States, 2005). While several studies

focus on Black students' experiences in secondary classrooms, very few assess the experiences of elementary students in their social studies classrooms (Au, 2007; Ellis, 2007). While it is not surprising that topics pertaining to race relations are the focal point in secondary social studies classrooms, elementary is the foundation for all disciplines which warrants attention to racially motivated content (Day, Miller-Day, Hecht, Fehmie, 2017; Kier & Lee, 2017; Dane, 1962;). Students are measured on U.S. History and Civics assessments in high school (Mueller & Colley, 2015). Students who score a level 3 or higher on the EOC exam is at or above grade level (Florida Department of Education, 2018). For example, the results of one Florida county reveals that 43.3 % of twelfth-grade Black students scored a level 3 or higher on the 2016-2017 U.S. History EOC exam, compared to 76.9% of Whites who scored a 3 or above on the same assessment (Florida Department of Education, 2018). Educators must expose students to an alternative curriculum at an early age so that they can develop a broader scope of their historical knowledge (King, 2014). With this early exposure, students are expected to appreciate the historical content, and to improve academically (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013).

Identifying perceptions that will assist Black children with assessing how they feel about the content is imperative so educators can adjust their pedagogical practices based on student experiences, and what they deem as important for educational growth (Ferrer, Grenier, Brotman, & Koehn, 2017; Harrington, 2016). Allowing Black students to share their experiences and express their thoughts is conducive to their knowledge and awareness of the subject (Scott, 2017). Creating a safe environment where students are comfortable to candidly express their viewpoints, frustrations, and enjoyments of social studies permits student security in the classroom (Boostrom, 1998). Holley and Steiner (2005, p. 50) stated that:

The metaphor of the classroom as a “safe space” has emerged as a description of a classroom climate that allows students to feel secure enough to take risks, honestly

express their views, and share and explore their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Safety in this sense does not refer to physical safety, instead, classroom safe space refers to protection from psychological or emotional harm. A safe classroom space is one in which students are able to openly express their individuality, even if it differs dramatically from the norms set by the instructor, the profession, or other students. Safe space does not necessarily refer to an environment without discomfort, struggle, or pain. Being safe is not the same as being comfortable. To grow and learn, students often must confront issues that make them uncomfortable and force them to struggle with who they are and what they believe. (p. 50)

Students may or may not be permitted to express their true feelings and attitudes in a typical classroom setting (Cohn-Vargas & Steele, 2016). As the researcher, I talked less and listened more. Furthermore, my research questions encouraged conversations that allowed students to share their perceptions extensively regarding the social studies curriculum. As with one-to-one student interviews, I allowed the focus group participants to extensively share their thoughts and feelings regarding the social studies content. In both settings, the idea was to gain as much information from the students so that I was able to arrive at a firm conclusion (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, observations of student work confirmed further inquiry based on participants' interviews regarding the social studies content (Henderson, 2015). Thus, formative assessments involve an on-going process rather than a one-time event; this process includes both the teacher (in my case the researcher) and the student (Box, Skoog, & Dabbs, 2015). The rationale for this study is not only intended to collect data for dissertation purposes, but it also serves as a resource for educators to utilize during their social studies instruction to improve pedagogical practices by implementing culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000) and integrating multiple perspectives into the curriculum. Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, and Wiliam (2004 p. 10) stated that formative assessment is:

Assessment for learning is any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting students' learning. It thus differs from assessment designed primarily to serve the purposes of accountability, or of ranking, or of certifying competence. An assessment activity can help learning if it provides

information that teachers and their students can use as feedback in assessing themselves and one another and in modifying the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes “formative assessment” when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet learning needs. (p. 10)

Significance of this study

As previously noted, a plethora of research conducted in secondary social studies classrooms have been recognized in several areas. Scholars have examined the achievement gap (Borman, Grigg, & Hanselman, 2016) of Black students compared to White students on assessments such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP (Pitre, 2014). While other researchers have used Black films to teach race-related historical events in the United States and abroad (Loewen, 1996). It is understood that such emphasis is placed on secondary social studies classrooms due to teacher evaluations as a result of high-stakes testing (Au, 2007). However, to grasp an authentic analysis of student comprehension, educators must start in the primary grades (Carr, 1983). Previous research shows that the curriculum and instruction fails to align with what students, especially Black students, need to be successful in the classroom (Debray, Parson, & Avila, 2003). Identifying these areas in elementary school will create a smooth transition for students as they advance to the next grade level (Heilig, Brown, & Brown, 2012).

This research was significant because it concentrated on elementary social studies and few studies have examined social studies in early education. A designated social studies ‘block’ or ‘hour’ allows educators minimal time to teach the content in primary grades (Denton & Sink, 2015; Heafner & Fitchett, 2013). Depending on the grade level, the content is taught differently. For example, in kindergarten classrooms students learn about national holidays, American symbols, members of the community, and so forth (CPALMS, 2017). In the fifth grade, students

learn topics such as societies of North America, American explorers, and economics (CPALMS, 2017). The pedagogical practices used when teaching these topics will determine students' level of interest and positive experiences about social studies. Elementary educators have the opportunity to create positive images, thoughts, and feelings about social studies, which makes this study significant.

Research Questions

To develop a useful qualitative research study, the questions must be appropriate and guide the research study (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). The research questions guided the literature for this study (Karttunen, 1977). The following questions and sub-questions were used:

1. What are the learning experiences of Black students in an elementary fifth grade classroom during social studies instruction?

2. Sub Questions:

- a. How do these experiences influence student perceptions of social studies instruction?
- b. How do the perceptions of students during social studies instruction influence student reactions?

To answer these questions, I conducted a phenomenological study of Black fifth grade students in an elementary classroom setting. Creswell (2013) states that a qualitative researcher's goal is to delve into the study and report the multiple perspectives exposed by researcher, uncover the explanations that support the participants' attitudes and beliefs, and utilize the given information to depict a larger picture of the phenomenon being studied. As a precursor to this phenomenological study, I will conduct a review of critical race theory. The research questions are the guiding light for this theory; thus, it will facilitate effective

questioning permissible to gain an accurate and detailed account of Black fifth grade students' perceptions of social studies topics during instruction. It is during this stage of formulating the research questions where I utilized critical inquiry to avoid the possibility of simplistic participant responses, hyperbolic egotism, and unclaimed dogmatism (Roof, Polush, & Boltz, 2017). Critical research questions require a comprehensive analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the topic (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009).

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

I use Critical Race Theory (CRT) to confirm my findings. Furthermore, I explain in the review of literature the tenets of CRT. The five core tenets of CRT are (Sleeter, 2012):

1. Centrality of race and racism in society

The first tenet of CRT recognizes and emphasizes that race is a permanent component of society. Racism in America commenced in 1619 when 20 kidnapped Africans arrived in Jamestown, Virginia on a slave ship (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1979; Fage, 1969). Racism will exist in every aspect of American life to include politics, the healthcare system, and indeed education.

2. Challenges to dominant ideology

Critical Race Theory challenges those in opposition of racial equality. In education, CRT suggests that teachers integrate lessons on multiple perspectives, but also provide opportunities for Blacks and other minorities to excel academically. Furthermore, CRT confronts the laws, policies, and institutions that purports equality for all citizens.

3. Whites as recipients of racial remedies

The third tenet maintains that Whites are only concerned with their own self-interest and are only interested in the needs of Blacks if they (Whites) benefit from the cause. This tenet addresses the issues of Whites' failure to genuinely be concerned for the well-being of Blacks.

4. Centrality of experiential knowledge

The next tenet assumes that people who truly understand racism are those who have been victims of the act. Sleeter explains that experiential knowledge is used in many forms to share how racism has shaped people, events, and society.

5. Commitment to social justice

The final tenet of CRT focuses on the commitment to social justice in all forms of society to include politics, the healthcare system, and education. This commitment involves the collaborative effort of all stakeholders such as educators, teacher educators, policy-makers, governmental officials, and others.

While it is more than simply listing these doctrines, identifying how scholars incorporate these tenets into their course and research will facilitate racial discourse in the P-12 classrooms, encourage CRT lessons, and promote curriculum restructuring (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Crenshaw, 1988). CRT expounds on how I orchestrated this study. This will include formulating the research questions, recognizing the purpose, identifying the problem, gathering supporting literature, and designing the methodology and data collection. Additionally, I provide a thorough review of the literature both theoretically and empirically (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Below are a few examples of how scholars use CRT in their research as well as in their teacher education methods courses:

1. Daniel Solorzano

Professor Solorzano, used CRT to assess critical racial pedagogy and racial microaggressions on campus.

2. Gloria Ladson-Billings

Professor Ladson-Billings established CRT as a popular issue for understanding school inequity, culturally relevant pedagogy, and multicultural perspectives in education.

3. Tyrone Howard

Professor Howard used CRT to identify the achievement gap of low-income minority students in P-12 public educational schools.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) focuses on developing equal opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds such as racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). Since educators are guided by pedagogy in making critical decisions regarding lessons and classroom activities, it is imperative that when planning they acknowledge the differences of all students (Closson, Bowman, & Merriweather, 2014). Society has and will always be confronted with racism, but the way in which the pedagogical approach is used to teach racism must alter to fit the needs of all students, mainly students of color (Giroux, 2003). Elementary teachers can ensure CRT is being addressed by teaching from a multiple perspectives lens allowing students to watch and listen to stories of individuals from racial minority groups (Ciardiello, 2004). This involves inviting guest speakers such as immigrants to speak about their experiences in the country, observing films about racial indifferences, and

visiting museums. Studies have confirmed that additional resources and strategies are conducive for student learning (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001). Tools and strategies such as manipulatives for mathematics, hands-on lab experiments for science, and think aloud activities for reading, are all resources that augment student learning. When it comes to social studies, researchers must also develop innovative lessons that will motivate elementary students learning about historical people, places, and events (McCall, 2011).

Critical Race Theory & Qualitative Research

Merging critical race theory and qualitative research sets the stage for a robust and in-depth research study (Johnson & Stefurak, 2012). The amalgamation of this theory and research design transitions from using theory to actual practice. Integrating CRT identifies the realism that Black students face not only in their communities, but within the classroom as well (Bonilla-Silva, 2009). Race is by far one of the most confrontational and widely used schisms in society, but remains one of the least understood dilemmas of humankind (Howard, 2008). To integrate critical race theory in education, racial dialog must ensue to first establish a foundational core. In Cornell West's *Race Matters* (1993), he suggests that society as a whole, no matter the race is interdependent upon each other. West further states to engage in critical conversations about race, the following must transpire (1993 p. 3)

To engage in a serious discussion of race in America, we must begin not with the problems of black people but with the flaws of American society- flaws rooted in historic inequalities and longstanding cultural stereotypes. How we set up the terms for discussing racial issues shapes our perception and response to these issues. As long as black people are viewed as a "them," the burden falls on blacks to do all the "cultural" and "moral" work necessary for healthy race relations. The implication is that only certain Americans can define what it means to be American-and the rest must simply "fit in. (p. 3)

This “serious discussion of race” mentioned by West, should not only occur in government, business, and law, but in education as well. It is necessary for educators of all races to ask themselves the question of whether or not they are illuminating or dispelling social justice teaching in their classrooms (Leistyna, 2009). Teaching students to become social justice oriented and proponents of equality requires strategic planning. Social justice pedagogical practices require more than merely informing students not to hate, but rather it involves activities such as role play, simulations, and groups discussions (Olwell, Murphy, & Rice, 2015). West’s later discussions on a “psychic state” in public school education involves teachers inciting thought-provoking actions from students regarding race related topics. There are those who contend that social justice has no place in the classroom as some teachers may force their biases and beliefs on students (Applebaum, 2009). However, the teacher is responsible for actively engaging students and presenting multiple viewpoints; the student has to make his or her own decisions as to whether or not they accept the challenge to be socially just in the classroom as well as in society (Tilley & Taylor, 2013). Identifying these students’ perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about race is best suited for a qualitative study.

Where quantitative research is concerned with the abundance, qualitative research is intended to gather in-depth information. When discussing race related topics, it is necessary to interview, observe, and allow students to express feelings (Stake, 2010). The topic of race is not fixated on numerical data (Henson, Hull, & Williams, 2010), but rather thorough answers from participants (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research entails richness, rigor, and value (Cooley, 2013). In this methodological design, both parties were active participants. As the researcher, it was my responsibility to build a trustworthiness rapport with the participants to elicit honest feedback. I used CRT to formulate participant questions, look for specifics during observation,

and identify the appropriate codes. The participants' role during this study was to candidly express their feelings regarding social studies (Ceglowski, 2000). In addition to verbal expression, the participants also shared their thoughts through writing (Glowacki-Dudka & Griswold, 2016).

Limitations of the study

Both quantitative and qualitative research pose threats to validity. Participant surveys, as well as interviews, are exposed to threats of validity (Awad, Patall, Rackley, & Reilly, 2016). The first limitation of this study involved including only one school to conduct my research. Although the students who participated in this study were Black, it is still not representative of the entire student population within this district or county. Additionally, while these students do reside in an urban setting located in a major city, it still does not account for the perceptions of all Black students. For example, Black students who reside in middle to upper class neighborhoods may have different experiences during social studies instruction compared to those from low-income neighborhoods (Apple, 2017).

The second limitation to the research was the use of only one classroom for this study. This limited the inclusion of identifying the perceptions of other Black fifth grade students in this district. Since my research site was located at a small charter school, I was limited to how many classes could participate in the study. I incorporated methodological triangulation to gather more than one data source (Denzin, 1978).

Experience as an African American student in a social studies classroom

As a former African American student in the public educational system, I was constantly challenged to perform greatness. I recall during my adolescent years always having an intense interest in liberal studies. My interest increased in my sixth-grade social studies classroom. I vividly remember my social studies teacher and her enthusiasm for the subject. It was during this grade when I learned that social studies was more than reciting and memorizing dates and facts. Instead, we learned about historical facts and dates through role-play, games such as jeopardy, and scavenger hunts. Simply put, social studies was fun! Transitioning from middle to high school, my teachers were not as enthused about the subject as my former middle school teacher. Yet, my love for the subject never faded. Luck was once again on my side when I enrolled in an eleventh-grade dual enrollment history course that was offered at my high school. Parallel to my sixth-grade teacher, my eleventh-grade instructor was excited about history. Although I enjoyed her enthusiasm and style of teaching, there was a missing piece to my historical acquisition that as a pre-teen I failed to acknowledge. Discussions about African American history was meager in both the sixth and eleventh grades. It was not until my collegiate years that I learned about Black history from a multiple perspectives viewpoint.

As a former student of a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), I was required to enroll in African American History prior to 1865, and African American History from 1865 to present. I will confess that although I love history, initially I was unhappy about having to enroll in two additional semesters of history courses, especially since I had satisfied my college history requirements while taking dual enrollment. For me, this meant I would be in college longer than I had anticipated. I recall pleading with my advisor that having to enroll in two additional semesters would delay my graduation for a year. She unapologetically stared me directly in the

eyes and A. Williams said every student at CAU will take at least six credit hours of African American history courses in order to graduate so if you want to graduate Ms. Walker, you will take these classes (personal communication, July 2003). The next day I enrolled in African American History prior to 1865. The first day of class marked the beginning of my love and appreciation of Black history. My African American history professors were passionate about the discipline and their goals were to instill that same passion within their students.

My appreciation for Black history transformed while at Clark Atlanta University. We learned about more than Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X (though not to devalue these historical figures), but also the contributions and sacrifices of Marcus Garvey, Charles Drew, and Billie Holiday to name a few. We engaged in discourse on topics such as the Civil Rights Movement, mass incarcerations of African American males, and improving education for all, especially Black students. I knew my research on African American studies would not cease post college. As a classroom teacher, it was imperative that I instilled the same passion for history that my professors imparted upon me. This included culturally relevant teaching and allowing my students to express their thoughts regarding historical events. I always integrated history, geography, civics, and economics even in my elementary class. Creating a historical foundation for my students was important. I wanted them to develop a love for history earlier than I did. In addition to verbally sharing their experiences about historical events, people, and places, they expressed their thoughts in writing. At the conclusion of each week, every student shared what they learned that week in social studies. It was during this activity that I learned students have a lot to voice when it comes to history, present-day society, and taking a stand for what they believe. As a future teacher educator and researcher, I hope my students instill the same appreciation and love for history.

Definition of terms

Black- An ethnic group of Americans with total or partial ancestry from any of the Black racial groups of Africa. Blacks may also be referred to as African Americans. Blacks account for one of the largest racial and ethnic groups in the United States.

Charter School- Independently operated public schools which can be started by different members within the community such as parents, local leaders, and other organizations. Charter schools do not charge tuition.

Critical Race Theory- Critical race theory (CRT) surfaced in the early 1980s as scholars of color in legal studies began to examine racism in America following the Civil Rights Movement and the role of the law in continuing unequal race relations. This theory commenced in the area of legal studies (Sleeter, 2012).

Critical Race Theory in Education- Utilizing CRT in education involves close examination of inequalities in P-12 and higher education (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). It encourages educators to use multiple perspectives as methods of teaching. Critical race theory in the classroom not only focuses on Blacks, but advocating for voices of all minority groups.

Culturally Relevant Teaching/Pedagogy- A teaching method or pedagogy grounded in teachers' displaying cultural competence. Teachers should be able to teach in a cross-cultural or multicultural environment. They enable each student to relate course content to his or her cultural context. While this term often refers to the instruction of African American or Black students in the United States, it has been proven to be an effective form of pedagogy for students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Elementary P-5 Schools- An elementary school is designed for children between the ages of 4–14. Also referred to as primary education, elementary school starts with prekindergarten and

ends with fifth grade. However, some elementary schools start with kindergarten and concludes with sixth grade. Students in elementary typically learn the fundamentals of the following subjects: social studies, science, mathematics, reading, arts, music, and physical education.

Social Justice- Fair and equal treatment of an individual, environment, and institution.

Social Studies- Social studies is the integrated study of history, geography, civics, economics, political science, philosophy, religion, sociology, anthropology, and archeology.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction to the literature

The endless research and debates about race and race related topics is steadily increasing in American culture (Gilbert & Rossing, 2013). It is impossible to work, travel, and exist without discussing topics of race in everyday life (Flores & Moon, 2002). The purpose for this review of literature is to contextualize the framework used to further research, educate, and alter the way race is viewed, and topics are discussed in American schools (Donnor, 2012; Milner, 2007). Specifically, this review of literature's central focus explores Black elementary students' positionality when it comes to social studies. The intent of this review of literature is not to denigrate previous works concerning this topic, but rather to extend the current scholarship and reveal the paucity of research in certain areas (Boote & Beile, 2005). As with any review of literature, the content should be thorough and provide new knowledge to the reader. Furthermore, the review of literature presents findings from previous studies and situates the text (Bruce, 2001) so it parallels with the current study. For this study, I examine Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Black students in elementary social studies classrooms. It is equally important to ensure the centrality of relevance of a study (Maxwell, 2006). Identifying the root of a problem is the ultimate solution (Boyer & Hamil, 2008). Initially, I derived at focusing on Black elementary students' experiences in social studies as a result of examining Black high school students' U.S. History test scores. Not only compared to their White peers, but African American students scored lower than students from other racial groups when observing these specific scores (Florida Department of Education, 2018; Barton & Coley, 2010). As with any subject, the achievement gap does not start in high school, but rather in the primary grades (Gordon, 1963). Thus, I retraced the steps to identify what is taught in elementary social studies,

and I identified how Black students are interpreting this content. A solid literature review will provide the reader with a detailed and clear understanding of the study (Boote & Beile, 2006). As Merriam and Simpson (2000) states, it is imperative that the literature review encompasses essential elements that supports the empirical research. These five elements include:

1. Creating a solid base
2. Expounding on the various ways a study creates awareness
3. Forming a concept based on the study
4. Evaluating the methodological approaches used
5. Interpreting findings

Additionally, the literature review supports the purpose and problem statement of a study (Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009). This review of literature examines CRT to expand on the current study of Black fifth grade students in elementary social studies.

The May 17, 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling was undoubtedly a landmark case that kindled the onset of the Civil Rights Movement (Fine, 2004; Hartung, 2004). The United States Supreme Court overruled the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1896 which allowed “separate but equal” facilities; to include schools (Jackson, 2004). The *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling justified separate facilities indicating that although schools were separated, they must be equal (Stephan, 1978). This purported equality included access to resources such as textbooks, desks, and even highly qualified teachers (Rivkin, 2016). While White students during the “separate but equal” era were privileged with new textbooks, desks, and other school supplies, Black students often received used, torn, and ripped pages that White schools no longer wanted. Chief Justice Earl Warren (1954) stated:

Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law, for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group...Any language in contrary to this finding is rejected. We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.

Justice Warren along with eight others believed that in order for Black students to be afforded a superior education, school separation had to be abolished. This monumental movement sparked what seemed to be equality and fair treatment for African American students (McCarthy, Caruthers, & Davis, 2009), but it only caused heightened tensions in a nation where the Civil Rights Movement was at its peak (Joyner, 2013). There was a period in the American educational system where integrated schools benefited both Black and White students (DeCuir-Gunby, 2007). However, it seems as though those days are slowly dissolving, and the country is entering into separate, but not equal schools (Stephan, 1978). Although the Plessy v. Ferguson ruling quoted "separate, but equal," as previously noted, this was not the case (Graglia, 1976). More than 120 years ago, Whites attempted to hide these inequalities and pretended as though Black schools were equal to White schools; Blacks felt otherwise (Fine, 2004). The establishment of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has once again depicted Black students as inferior to White students when looking at student test scores (Rowley & Wright, 2011).

Improving reading and mathematics proficiency for all students in the United States by 2014 was the goal President Bush aimed to achieve (Bland, 2014). Each state had specific criteria for ensuring students met Adequate Yearly Progress by which schools, districts, and states were held accountable for student performance under the NCLB Act. In 2011, the state of Florida implemented the first end of course (EOC) exam which included Algebra I, and over the next few years added other subjects to include U.S. History (Florida Department of Education, 2018). Black students scored lower than their White counterparts, which depicts the opportunity

gap in U.S. history education; mainly for African American students (Heafner & Fitchett, 2015). The test items reflected content covered (Lubienski, 2006) in U.S. history classrooms, which was not representative of stories told from a multiple perspectives vantage (West-Burns, 2016).

More than a decade later, individuals continue to question the purpose and effect NCLB has had on minority students in education (Conley, 2004; Lee, 2002). An alarming rate of decreased academic performance for Black students compared to White students proposed a federal mandate that all states include norm-referenced tests (NRT) to administer student achievement for specific subjects (Savage, 2003). Unlike criterion-referenced tests (CRT), NRT were intended to identify high achievers from low achievers. While it was apparent to President George W. Bush that some students performed lower than other students, it became an even greater debate as states released their students' test scores (Starr, 2014). First, I examine the definitions of "curriculum" and "high-stakes." Curriculum is defined as formal subjects or courses to be completed by students (Young, 2014). High-stakes testing includes making crucial educational decisions that will impact students, teachers, administrators, and school districts (Myers, 2015; Abrams & Madaus, 2003; Madaus, 1988). Specifically, high-stakes testing is a form of policy (Schneider & Ingram, 1993) that link students' assessment scores to grade promotion, high school graduation, school funding, and teachers and administrators' evaluations. Additionally, if standardized tests will continue as the method to determine students' knowledge in a subject area, specifically social studies, policy-makers need to create authentic tests where students can apply everyday skills (Wiggins, 1989). Below are a few examples that Wiggins (1989) suggest for testing student knowledge on an oral history project:

1. Investigate three hypothesis
2. Describe one change

3. Demonstrate knowledge of background research
4. Interview four individuals related to the topic
5. Create four questions related to each hypothesis
6. Ask non-biased questions
7. Ask follow-up questions
8. Identify differences in fact and opinion
9. Support the hypothesis with proven evidence
10. Create an organized paper and class presentation

The above list for evaluating students' knowledge not only assists with a better understanding of the content, but it is also relevant material that does not force rote memorization of facts and dates (Fata-Hartley, 2011); rather it permits students to use critical thinking skills and go beyond information from the textbook (Hall & Sabey, 2007). Black students who participate in project-based learning are more likely to remember the material and apply it to their lives (Bicer, Boedeker, Capraro, & Capraro, 2015; Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011). In addition to test scores, Black students' grades are lower than their White peers in social studies related courses such as U.S. history, civics, and American Government (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). There are voluminous factors resulting in Black students' academic underachievement when it comes to grades and standardized testing (Gatlin & Wilson, 2016; Butler-Barnes, Chavous, Hurd, & Varner, 2013). For example, students fail to connect the significance in subjects such as U.S. History to their everyday experiences (Smith & Niemi, 2001). Thus, devoted time for homework in specified subjects is limited due to their disinterest. It is the responsibility of the educator to engage students and move beyond textbook pedagogy (Henke, Chen, & Goldman, 1999). Milner (2010) states that when assessing factors of

“perceived” achievement gap of Black students, it is more to consider than just students are not performing well due to their dislike of the subject, but rather he contends:

The teacher quality gap, the teacher training gap, the challenging curriculum gap, the school funding gap, the digital divide gap, the wealth and income gap, the employment opportunity gap, the affordable housing gap, the health care gap, the nutrition gap, the school integration gap, and the quality childcare gap each impacts Black students’ performance. (Milner, 2010, p. 9)

Additionally, parental involvement, or the lack thereof, influences student learning in social studies (Howard & Reynolds, 2008). In fact, parental involvement significantly influences students’ academic achievement (Barnard, 2004). Students of all racial groups perform 30 points higher on standardized assessments compared to students with no parental involvement (Dietel, 2006). African American students whose parents are actively involved in their education, especially as it relates to social studies, are able to promote racial and ethnic appreciation (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004). This racial and ethnic appreciation encourages Black students’ engagement in critical conversations while in social studies classrooms (Howard, 2001). Furthermore, when students are actively engaged, it reflects on their U.S. history standardized scores, as well as their grades in social studies (Haycock, 2001). To address these conditional terms, there have to be changes to social studies’ standards that reflect the perspectives of those from marginalized groups (Noboa, 2012).

Another factor that contributes to African American students’ level of performance on standardized testing is their cultural background (Kirby & DiPaola, 2011). Cultural background may influence African American students’ level of performance on EOC exams as well (Childs, 2015). The socioeconomic status, which includes income and educational background, directly correlates with student achievement or lack of achievement on assessments (Reardon, 2011). More often than not, social and cultural background affect a student’s performance in school

(Gipps, 1999). Experts contend that NCLB closing the achievement gap through assessments failed to examine external factors (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Neighborhoods have a significant impact on the levels of value placed on peer groups (Smith & Patton, 2016). Collective efficacy plays a role in the development of peer associations because those neighborhoods that exhibit strong cohesion where adults take part in ensuring social control between the neighborhood children, positive peer relationships are established (Jarrett, Bahar, & Taylor, 2011).

Black youth in urban neighborhoods are likely to witness more shootings and stabbings compared to youth in neighborhoods with higher socioeconomic status, causing them to be at a greater risk for traumatic exposure (Caughy, Hayslett-McCall, & O'Campo, 2007). Individuals confronted with homicidal loss deal with both separation distress and traumatic distress which is associated with the manner in which they lost their loved one (Hastings & Kelley, 1997).

African Americans are more likely to encounter violent situations opposed to non-Latino Whites, Latinos, and Asians (Schubiner, Scott, & Tzelepis, 1993). African Americans residing in urban neighborhoods are at a greater risk of witnessing homicidal acts, due to their code of the streets loyalty (Singer, Anglin, Song, & Lunghofer, 1995). Decent families and street families are terms used to describe the home environment where these young people reside (Street, Harris-Britt, Walker-Barnes, 2009). Decent families teach their children to respect the law, attend school regularly, and disengage in violent acts. Whereas street families are lenient with their children allowing them to stay out late, drink, smoke, and encourage them to solve their problems with violence. The aforementioned not only increases the level of violence in inner city communities, but it also causes children to display higher levels of aggression leading into adulthood. Neighborhoods with high levels of hostility often times experience different types of homicidal acts.

The mortality rate for African Americans living in an underprivileged neighborhood is greater than Whites living in middle-to upper class areas. The mortality rate for African Americans, especially males, continue to witness an incline (Hipp, 2001). Thirty years ago, homicide was the leading cause of death for young Black males. Regionally, the South has shown the highest rate of homicide for more than thirty years (Huff-Corzine, Corzine, & Moore, 1986). In addition, due to the larger percentage of Blacks in the South, this has accounted for a higher rate of homicide for this racial group. Gun violence is the number one leading cause of homicide in the Black community. Blacks assert a sense of necessity to own a gun in order to protect themselves not only from foes outside of their community, but those within as well (Johnson, 2013). With these pressures and the uncertainty of living to see another day, Black youth are unable to focus in school. Consequently, their test scores, primarily U.S. history EOC are indicative of this reality (Shumow, Vandell, & Posner, 1999). These overt levels of discrimination transferred to inequalities within the social studies textbooks and the standards by which they are governed (Busey & Russell, 2016).

Rather than inundating students with massive amounts of facts, dates, and people from the past, employing alternative pedagogical strategies will capture students' attention in a different way. For example, if the textbook mentions the Tuskegee Airmen, the teacher should then incorporate a film to heighten and supplement their knowledge about this historical event. This will provide them with an in-depth insight about the contributions of these African American men (Russell & Waters, 2013). This engagement allows students to translate what they learned from the textbook to the visual images onscreen (D'sa, 2005). Students are often disengaged when it comes to discussions about history. Likewise, when they are asked to think

critically about past events they struggle when attempting to formulate their thoughts and expressions regarding the content.

Social studies education is the essence of students learning about current and historical events (Fitchett, Heafner, & Lambert, 2017). Critical Race Theory provided analytic insight to my study and it allowed me to explore how social studies' lessons are taught, and how students perceived this information. For social studies to have beneficial remnants that affect Black students, the instructional strategies must be indicative of student learning. Students who are actively engaged in the lesson will likely retain the information and be able to connect classroom and real-life situations (Tilley & Taylor, 2013). Unfortunately, Black students do not understand the relevance of how history may affect their lives (Aoki, 1993). By conducting this study, I was able to define the emotions, thoughts, and questions fifth grade students had pertaining to historical events, people, and places discussed during social studies instruction.

Social Studies Standards and Multiple Perspectives

For decades, scholars have examined the lack of multiple perspectives in K-12 social studies standards (Jordan, Brown, & Gutierrez, 2010). Standards are not new in the field of education, in fact, they extend as far back as the early 1980s (Barton, 2009). Standards are the learning goals for what students should know and be able to academically perform at every grade level (Common Core State Standards, 2017). The educational standards drive the academic curriculum for a course. The curriculum consists of lessons and academic content taught in schools. Every state governs their standards differently. For example, the state of Florida's Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, are designed to provide students with the academic skills needed in primary, secondary, and postsecondary education (Florida Department of Education,

2018). While every teacher in the state of Florida is required to teach from standards to address the subject areas of English Language Arts, social studies, mathematics, and science, not every grade level will administer assessments in those subject areas. When it comes to standards based on social studies content, Florida students are tested on the U.S. history content, which is administered in the ninth through the twelfth grades. To ensure students meet these standards, teachers participate in ongoing professional development. Depending on factors such as the district, school, and administration, certain standards receive a higher level of attention than others. Continuing with the state of Florida example, the teaching of social studies standards begins in kindergarten. When examining Florida's fifth grade elementary social studies standards, teachers cover American History, Civics and Government, Economics, and Geography (CPALMS, 2017).

Within each Florida social studies standard are strands that include specific topics to teach. Below is an outline of the standards for the American History strand:

1. SS.5.A.1: Historical Inquiry and Analysis
2. SS.5.A.2: Pre-Columbian North America
3. SS.5.A.3: Exploration and Settlement of North America
4. SS.5.A.4: Colonization of North America
5. SS.5.A.5: American Revolution & Birth of a New Nation
6. SS.5.A.6: Growth and Westward Expansion

These standards are necessary for students when learning about American history. However, the content is conveyed from a European-American perspective (Noboa, 2012). Specifically, the standard SS.5.A.2: Pre-Columbian North America identifies different Native American tribes and how they navigated throughout the country (CPALMS, 2017). CPALMS

offers further resources such as lesson plans on how teachers can incorporate this standard into their daily activity. The lesson description indicates that students will learn about Native Americans and how the geography, such as the climate and natural resources, influenced their way of living. From a multiple perspectives viewpoint, the social studies textbooks should include specific accounts from Native Americans about their experiences in America and their thoughts regarding living in North America (Shear, Knowles, Soden, & Castro, 2015; Anderson, 2012). Students from Native American backgrounds may be able to identify with and possibly develop a sense of appreciation for their culture. In addition to the lack of multiple perspectives for Native Americans, history textbooks neglect other marginalized groups such as Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans.

Historians would argue that Blacks or African Americans contributed largely to the development of the United States (Mungo, 2013). The omission of Blacks or African Americans' perspectives from the fifth grade standards (Anderson & Metzger, 2011), deprive Black elementary students the opportunity to appreciate their cultural background (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011; Irvine-Jordan, 1991). Such omissions have resulted in the dislike and boredom of social studies for Black students. Students who are unable to relate and connect the educational content to their everyday lives will fail to value the subject (Olwell, Murphy, & Rice, 2015). It is no secret the European perspective is included in all social studies grade levels; therefore, the perspectives of marginalized groups should also be included in all social studies grade level standards (Brown & Brown, 2010).

Critical Race Theory

A group of law professors who recognized the need to confront issues of race, power, and racism in America founded Critical Race Theory (CRT) in the mid-1980s (Delgado, 2001).

Legal scholars Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado reacted against the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement and its failure to recognize race as an essential component in the legal system (Caldwell, 1996). The individuals departed the group in 1989 and established CRT.

One of the co-founding members defined CRT as:

The work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and that work toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination. (Matsuda, 1991, p. 1331)

Scholars Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, and Kimberle Crenshaw acknowledge that CRT encompasses every aspect of life and not just in the legal system. They further believed that to ignore CRT and pretend as though it does not exist is the act of color blindness (Gotanda, 1991).

Bonilla-Silva (2009) situates color-blind racism into four terms, which includes abstract liberalism, naturalization of race, cultural racism, and minimization of racism. Each term examines racism and is applicable to all aspects of society.

1. Abstract liberalism

The use of ideas associated with politics that ignores equal opportunity and applies subtle racism concerning topics such as affirmative action.

2. Naturalization of race

This idea examines the extent to which those in the dominant group will justify separation such as in schools and neighborhoods under the notion that individuals live in these areas and attend certain schools because they are comfortable in their environment.

3. Cultural Racism

Generalize negative behaviors and/or attitudes among certain racial groups. For example, suggesting, “Blacks are loud” is a stigmatism that all individuals of the Black race are loud.

4. Minimization of Racism

This idea centralizes on the thought that racism either no longer exists or is not as bad as it previously was in American history (Curry, 2008). Individuals who minimize racism believe that Blacks as well as other minority groups have a plethora of opportunities for success.

Critical Race Theory in Education

Educational scholars Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate illuminated CRT in the field of education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Both Ladson-Billings and Tate broadened the scope of CRT in education, as they perceived the crucial need to employ this theory throughout the educational system to include standards, pedagogical practices, and educational decision-making (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The authors’ discourse on CRT in schools commenced with an examination of school inequality. The discussion focuses on three propositions:

1. Race continues to be the focal point when examining topics and issues of inequity in the United States.
2. The centralization of American society is rooted in property rights.
3. The intersection of race and property permits the understanding of social inequity.

Although CRT was initially intended to reveal the injustices within the legal system, these propositions can easily be applied in the field of education (Delgado, 2001). Utilizing CRT in the social studies classroom involves more than simply informing students that racism exists or presenting visual aids detailing how to treat everyone equally, but CRT in the social studies classrooms means first educating students about race and race relations. This level of education

extends beyond reading books and watching documentaries about racism, but rather inviting guests who have experienced racial injustices, such as individuals who experienced marches, rallies, and killings during the Civil Rights Movement (Mungo, 2013). Furthermore, a more salient method of inquiry includes active student engagement. Students should be able to share their feelings, frustrations, and viewpoints when it comes to race in America. An extension activity that allows students to identify similarities and differences among Black movement groups involves students analyzing the objectives of the Civil Rights Movement and the current Black Lives Matter Movement. These activities allow students the opportunity to express their voice and relate to events more pertinent in their lives (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011).

Black students fail to appreciate social studies; thus, they disregard the content presented in history, civics, and geography textbooks. Social studies educators should utilize methods such as having students create a family tree, share stories, and present biographies to illuminate the voices of marginalized groups (Allen, Hancock, Starker-Glass, & Lewis, 2017; Bell, 1987). It is also imperative that during these activities, discussions on how to respond to overt and subtle racism takes place (Perez, 2017; Bolgatz, 2007). The social studies classroom is the ideal environment in which to teach students effective ways of responding to either ignorance or forms of indirect racism.

Private Schools

Private school attendance has increased throughout the years with the implementation of school choice programs (Belfield & Levin, 2002; Stevans & Sessions, 2000). With minimal to no regulations from public sectors, private schools are permitted to make independent decisions regarding curriculum and pedagogical practices (Toma, 1996). Questions surrounding the

validity of private schools continue to be topics of interest for stakeholders. Private schools differ from public schools in several areas (Witte, 1992). For example, private schools typically consist of smaller classrooms, while public school classrooms are larger. Smaller classrooms allow teachers to have more one-on-one interactions with their students, resulting in higher academic achievement (Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982). These smaller classrooms have benefited schools such as Way To Go Private School (WTG). Private schools has forced the public school system to improve in the areas of academics, extracurricular activities, and college preparedness (Horowitz & Spector, 2005).

The autonomous rules and regulations of private schools allow administrators and teachers to make decisions to enable students to have a well-rounded school experience (Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982). These experiences include incorporating the arts, STEM programs, sports, and an in-depth social studies lesson. In public schools, social studies' lessons are limited due to more focus on subjects such as reading and mathematics, but in private schools teachers can explore social studies extensively (Cherchye, Witte, Ooghe, & Nicaise, 2010). These experiences expose students to different cultures and religions. Furthermore, non-religious private schools such as WTG can discuss a variety of religions and beliefs without violating school policy. Although the numbers have fluctuated with an increase over the years, college enrollment for Black students (Thompson, 1939) still lags Whites and students from other racial groups (Harper, Smith, & Davis, 2018).

Virtual Observations

When implementing critical race theory in the social studies classroom, virtual observations allow teachers to not only observe student reactions regarding the content, but it

also provides them with feedback on their teaching. A study of video technology with classroom teachers details five ways to effectively use the device to yield positive results (Center for Education Policy Research, 2013). Each of the five elements are video for self-reflection, video for peer collaboration, video for virtual coaching, video in evaluation, and build a video library. Each of these elements provides teachers with opportunities to increase student understanding of the content, modify classroom activities based on curriculum, and observe teaching styles. Although students enrolled in virtual classrooms is becoming increasingly popular in many districts across America, enrollment in traditional classrooms overwhelmingly surpasses that of the virtual classroom (Luo, Hibbard, Franklin, & Moore, 2017). Thus, effective pedagogical practices are a necessity in schools (Quintana, Sagredo, & Lytras, 2017). With virtual observations, teachers can transform their classrooms into positive learning environments. Furthermore, Immersive Virtual World (IMV), is a new methodological approach that focuses on the teachers, their identity, and their actions inside the classroom (Quintana & Fernandez, 2015). Integrating virtual observations with CRT can increase student learning outcomes and provide teachers with rich data to reflect on teacher practices.

Conclusion

The purpose of this review of literature was to identify previous scholarship on Critical Race Theory. By utilizing CRT in elementary social studies classrooms, Black elementary students will acknowledge perspectives not only from the European American viewpoint, but from individuals of color as well. These observations allow Black elementary students to transfer the skills acquired in elementary school to middle and high school. Consequently, it is important that the social studies standards are indicative of what students will learn in the

classroom. Implementing social studies standards that grant all teachers the freedom to teach using CRT will contribute to student achievement (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to identify Black fifth-grade students' perceptions during their social studies instruction. These perceptions were centered on historical events, people, and places. Furthermore, I wanted to identify Black fifth grade students' background knowledge pertaining to African American or Black individuals in American history. This included the Civil Rights Movement, the Civil War, and the Great Migration to name a few. The intent was not to present researcher bias, but rather to collect authentic representation of the students' knowledge regarding historical events (Ebbs & Preston, 1997). There is a disparity among Black students' assessment scores on the U.S. history EOC exam in high school social studies (Florida Department of Education, 2018; Rowley & Wright, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lee, 2002). In addition to collecting data from Black fifth grade students, I also conducted a focus group with middle and high school students. The purpose of collecting data from secondary students was to identify their experiences during social studies. The problem I addressed in this study was the lack of Black students' interest and knowledge of social studies content (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011).

Research Question and Sub Questions

1. What are the learning experiences of Black students in an elementary fifth grade classroom during social studies instruction?
2. Sub Questions:
 - a. How do these experiences influence student perceptions of social studies instruction?
 - b. How do the perceptions of social studies instruction influence student reactions?

The research question was the guiding light that facilitated this study. The rationale for this phenomenological study was to describe and interpret the experiences of Black fifth grade students during their social studies instruction. I used a phenomenological study to identify significant statements, meanings, and develop themes based on the participants' responses during the focus group and classroom observations (Creswell, 2013). I realized the importance of asking appropriate interview questions of the participants to elicit valuable feedback. To create my questions, I used LaCourse's (1990) idea of describing personal experiences. In formulating the research questions, I journeyed to my primal years. I contemplated on what aspects of history were interesting and if interviewed by a researcher what questions would I be excited to discuss. This illustration of personal and social meaning was used to develop the research question and sub-questions.

Research Design

This qualitative research design used transcendental phenomenology to gather the experiences of the participants identified in this study (Creswell, 2013; Van Manen, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Through the collection of data, I identified Black fifth grade students' experiences of social studies content regarding classroom activities, reading selections, and discussions. Furthermore, I determined the students' knowledge pertaining to racial groups of historical contexts in America.

Phenomenological Research

I chose to employ a transcendental phenomenological study to describe the lived experiences of my participants in their natural setting. Unlike other qualitative methods, a

phenomenological study gathers the experiences of a group of individuals that are representative of a larger population (Creswell, 2013). While an ethnographic design may be useful for future research studies involving similar phenomenon within the field of social studies, phenomenology allowed me to describe the experiences of participants who were similar to the former students that I taught. When deciding if phenomenology is the best research design, the researcher should ponder whether or not they have encountered personal experiences with the phenomenon (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). While the primary goal of a phenomenological study is to identify the experiences of a group, there are two types of phenomenology to examine when conducting research. The first type is hermeneutic phenomenology (Van Manen, 1990). With a hermeneutic study, the researcher first explores a topic or interest. During this exploratory process, the researcher highlights themes that are related to the lived experiences. The researcher writes a description of the phenomenon based on the themes discovered. Although hermeneutic phenomenology examines themes and the lived experiences of the phenomenon, I utilized the second type of phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). A transcendental or empirical phenomenological approach allows an in-depth structural analysis of the participants for a study. This approach is further outlined through the use of two descriptive levels that permit the researcher to witness the experiences of the phenomenon with fresh insights. The first level involves the researcher asking the participants open ended questions and allowing the participants to share their experiences without inducing responses (Giorgi, 1985). During the second level, the researcher analyzes the participants' shared experiences. Furthermore, Giorgi contends that allowing the participants to candidly discuss their experiences allows the researcher to either gain new knowledge or build upon existing data. Phenomenology, along with all forms of research design, risks the possibility of researcher bias.

As with any form of research, both qualitative and quantitative, researcher bias is always a concern. To minimize potential bias, Edmund Husserl (1931) created the concept of bracketing. Epoche or bracketing, occurs when the researcher disregards their experiences or thoughts concerning the phenomena. Husserl recommends that the researcher use bracketing by sharing their experiences of the topic through written documentation. After writing these experiences, the researcher then brackets or removes their views concerning the topic. After the bracketing process, the next phase of phenomenological research explores the experiences of the participants.

Research Setting

National Association of Independent Schools

Way to Go Private School is located in the Southeastern United States in a medium sized metropolitan city. It is situated in one of the top five largest school districts in the state, and the top ten largest school districts in the United States. There are a total of 264 P-12 schools in the district, educating more than 195,000 students. There are a total of 139 private schools in this district. Way to Go Private School is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). This is a nonprofit membership association that provides services to more than 1,800 national and international private schools (National Association of Independent Schools, 2008). As a member of NAIS, each private school develops their own unique mission that fits the needs of their student population. Private schools within this district consists of students from a variety of racial, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds. With this uniqueness and independence, there is no collective data indicating the racial make-up for the private schools in this district; however, this information is available at each individual private school and I

provided the data for WTG in the next section. It is worth noting that Black students account for 25% of the P-12 public school population in this district. Many of the private schools in this district provide 100% tuition assistance, while others assist partially. The tuition costs for private schools in this medium sized metropolitan city range from \$4,000 to \$18,390 per year.

Way to Go Private School

Way to Go Private School is located on a busy highway less than five minutes from the city's downtown area. The student population is 100% Black. The total student enrollment is 139, with 8 teachers and 11 staff members. All but one of the teachers self-identify as Black. The one teacher who was not Black, self-identified as White or Caucasian.

All of the students at WTG receive scholarship assistance; no parent pays for student tuition. The single parents primarily consisted of Black mothers. Since this is a private school and school zone is not applicable, the students were from various communities throughout the city. Many of the communities where these students reside are low to medium income neighborhoods. One neighborhood in particular where a number of the students reside witnessed an increase in homicide and crime within the year prior to when this study was conducted. Although the violent external factors of their neighborhood were less than desirable, the students at WTG still managed to show gains academically.

As a member of NAIS, the director and founder has the option of deciding which testing to use for indications of academic growth. All students are tested twice during the academic year on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The test is administered to students on the computer. The SAT is not used to retain WTG students, but rather as a guide for teachers to know where

their students are academically. The teachers then adjust their lessons accordingly to meet the needs of each student.

Research Participants

Sampling

As stated by Michael Patton (2015), all research involves purposeful sampling. Since qualitative research consists of smaller sample sizes, the information rich data I collected were from two purposeful sampling strategies (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). I applied two sampling strategies for each method of data collection. First, I applied the criterion sampling strategy for each of the three sources of data collected; focus group, observations, and student work samples. Since the participants for this study were Black students who have experienced social studies instruction, the criterion sampling strategy allowed me to focus only on students who met these criteria (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Primarily, the criterion sampling strategy was used for the fifth-grade participants only. Whereas, the maximum variation sampling strategy was used because I conducted a focus group with middle and high school students to gather their experiences of social studies instruction as well.

I applied the maximum variation sampling strategy since I conducted a focus group for fifth-grade, middle, and high school students who attended WTG. Maximum variation sampling strategy allowed me to examine the similarities and differences of these two groups. Both groups attended the same school, and experienced social studies instruction. However, the fifth-grade students had different experiences about the social studies content since their knowledge of the subject was only acquired at the elementary level. By contrast, the middle and high school students had experienced social studies instruction longer than the elementary students, and the

instruction was from a public and private school setting. The students had to meet the following qualifications to participate in the study:

1. Self-identify as Black
2. Be a fifth-grade student, and a middle and high school student at WTG

I focused on fifth-grade students and conducted a follow-up focus group with the middle and high school students. All but two of the elementary students acquired their knowledge of social studies from the public and private school setting, and all of the middle and high school students experienced social studies instruction in both public and private school. I intentionally chose fifth-grade, middle, and high school students for this study.

During this study, I conducted a focus group, observations, and collected student work samples from the fifth-grade participants only. The study primarily focused on fifth-grade students to identify their level of knowledge regarding the social studies content. At this grade level, it is expected that all students have some level of social studies education and can expound based on what they learned in previous grades. I collected data through a focus group, observations, and student work samples from the fifth-grade participants to identify their knowledge and experiences thus far in social studies.

Furthermore, I conducted only a focus group with the middle and high school participants. This group of students had more experience with the social studies content compared to the fifth-graders. As indicated in the table below, all of the middle and high school students attended both public and private schools. Secondly, collecting data from the middle and high school participants were readily available and I wanted to use this opportunity to gather their experiences as well. Lastly, I initially became interested in this topic as a result of viewing the differences in scores on the U.S. History EOC exam. The scores revealed that Black students

scored lower than White students on this exam (Florida Department of Education, 2018). Since the middle and high school participants have either already taken the U.S. History EOC, or will take it in the future if they transfer to a public school, it was necessary to identify their thoughts, attitudes, and feelings about social studies as well.

As a former elementary teacher, I recall my students expressing their desire to learn more about social studies. After an extensive review of the literature, I now understand that their positive experiences pertaining to social studies were attributed to my culturally responsive teaching. In a culture of constant high-stakes testing (Darling-Hammond, 2000), it is imperative to identify students' experiences in all subject areas (Gamoran, 1986). As with many academic disciplines, to identify the core of the issue one should first begin with students' primary background and their experiences with the subject (Ravitch, 2012). Although I taught third grade, I wanted to focus on fifth-grade students since they had more experience with social studies instruction. With this experience, they were able to incorporate prior knowledge of social studies content based on what they learned in previous grades. When examining high school students' U.S. History assessment scores, Black students scored lower than any racial group (Florida Department of Education, 2018). This aroused my interest and I wanted to further understand why Black students' test scores were lower than their White counterparts. Since the primary focus of this study was fifth-grade students, I only utilized one form of data collection with the middle and high school students. Conducting a focus group with the middle and high school students allowed me to gather their experiences regarding social studies instruction from elementary to high school. As a scholar in the field, it is imperative to understand high school students' experiences, thoughts, and beliefs about historical events, people, and places. This level of comprehension should be applied to elementary curriculum planning to create a solid

foundation and appreciation for social studies at a young age. Ideally, the student's knowledge of social studies will increase as they progress to the next grade and optimistically so will their history test scores.

Sample Size

The focal point of this research examined Black fifth-grade students through focus groups, observations, and student work samples. I also conducted a focus group with middle and high school students to gather their experiences as well. Qualitative research is more concerned with the depth of information and honing in on each participants' thoughts and experiences, rather than generalizing with large numbers (Creswell, 2013). In qualitative research, the quality of the research is more important than the quantity. When using a phenomenological study, Dukes (1984) recommends 3 to 10 participants. This study included 7 Black, fifth-grade students, and 8 Black middle and high school students. Although both groups were Black students, the experiences and level of knowledge differed between the elementary, middle, and high school students. The number of times I collected data for each method is listed below:

1. Focus Group Elementary- 1
2. Focus Group Middle and High- 1
3. Face-to-Face Observations- 7
4. Virtual Observation- 1
5. Student Work Samples- 3

Table 1 provides a list of students' background information. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of each student.

Table 1

List of Research Participants

Names	Grade	Attended Public/Private	Gender
Larry	5 th	Both	Male
Terrance	5 th	Both	Male
Tyrone	5 th	Both	Male
Erika	5 th	Both	Female
Diamond	5 th	Private	Female
Heaven	5 th	Private	Female
Tanesha	5 th	Both	Female
Michael	11 th	Both	Male
Jamarcus	10 th	Both	Male
DeAndre	9 th	Both	Male
Marquis	10 th	Both	Male
Malik	10 th	Both	Male
Darius	9 th	Both	Male
Asia	8 th	Both	Female
Nia	8 th	Both	Female

Sampling Procedures

I have never been employed at WTG as a teacher, nor in any other capacity at the school. I became familiar with WTG as a member of the community. I had a meeting with the founder and principal of WTG, Mrs. Hampton (pseudonym), to explain my research and request permission to conduct a research study at the school. Without hesitation, she said yes and was excited for WTG to be a part of this research project. With her approval, I was granted permission to conduct my research study at the site. Since WTG is a private school operating under their own rules and regulations, I did not have to seek approval from the district in which the school is situated. The parents received a parental consent form approved by the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board. Two sets of parental consent forms were sent home. One of the parental consent forms indicated that the individuals who were asked to

participate in the study were Black fifth-grade students at WTG (Appendix B). The second parental consent form indicated that the students who were asked to participate in the study were Black middle and high school students at WTG (Appendix C). Both consent forms provided a detailed description to include a synopsis of the problem addressed in the study, and a detailed outline specifying each student's involvement with the research.

I gave a consent form to all of the fifth-grade, and middle and high school students at WTG. Only the students who submitted a signed consent form participated in the focus groups, observations, and had their student work samples reviewed. There were 10 fifth-grade students, but seven students submitted a signed consent form. I conducted the elementary focus group first and at that time only five students had submitted a signed consent form. The two other students submitted their consent forms the following week so I viewed their student work samples once I had the written documentation.

Data Collection

Prior to collecting data, I received dated and signed approval from UCF IRB. Once I received approval from UCF IRB, I submitted the consent forms to the fifth-grade teacher, and the middle and high school history teacher for them to distribute to their students. As previously noted, qualitative research focuses more on quality, not quantity. However, admittedly, I confess to being more concerned with receiving as many parent consent forms as possible. As a result, I waited before I started collecting data. Another factor which delayed the collection of data was pre-scheduled holidays for both WTG, as well as myself. Initially, I wanted to collect data for six weeks, but due to the four-week delay, I collected data for five weeks. All data were

collected during school hours. The methods of data collection were focus groups, observations, and student work samples.

The elementary, middle, and high school students' focus groups were conducted inside the PE coach's office. The physical space of the school is small and most of the rooms were occupied with students in classes. The focus groups were conducted in an enclosed space with the door shut. The next method of data collection was observations which occurred inside the fifth-grade classroom. All of the observations were face-to-face except for one, which I conducted through virtual observation. During the virtual observation I used Skype to watch the student interactions from a remote location inside the building. The final method of data collection involved student work samples which I viewed inside the classroom. I did not remove any of the student work samples from the classroom. Some of the social studies assignments the students were working on required them to draw or create artwork. I used these work samples to further depict the students' perceptions of social studies instruction.

Data Triangulation

Data triangulation involves the use of multiple methods or data sources to ensure validity of the information collected (Denzin, 1978). While triangulation is primarily used for qualitative research, those using a mixed methods research design employ this test of validity as well (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). There are four types of triangulation methods: 1) method triangulation (used for this research study) uses multiple methods of data collection such as interviews, observations, and focus groups, 2) investigator triangulation involves two or more researchers collecting multiple data, 3) theory triangulation uses different theories to analyze and interpret data, and 4) data source triangulation involves

collecting data from different individuals such as community members, families, and groups (Carter et al., 2014). Through this data collection process, I was able to validate my data sources. Using method triangulation, I collected data through focus groups, observations, and student work samples.

As previously stated, both of the focus groups were conducted inside the PE coach's office. The coach's office was medium sized allowing just enough space for the students to be comfortable in this setting. There were two ways to enter the coach's office. The main entrance inside the office headed towards the west direction. Once inside the office, I arranged myself to face the students and they were seated around me in a semi-circle. Located directly behind the students were five large light brown lockers which appeared to be storage for PE items. When I faced the students, to the right of where I sat was the coach's desk. Around his desk area were red and blue mesh nets with basketballs and footballs inside. There was also a mini soccer goal located next to the coach's desk. When the students faced me, to the right of them were different colored gymnastics tumbling mats stacked on the floor against the wall. Directly behind the gymnastics tumbling mats was the other door which led into the kindergarten classroom. There were a few athletic posters on the walls.

The first focus group I conducted with the fifth-grade students lasted about 35 minutes. There were 5 students who participated in this focus group, 3 boys and 2 girls. Facing the students, to my left all of the boys were seated next to each other and the 2 girls were seated next to each other to my right. The second focus group with the high school students lasted about 1 hour. There were 2 middle school students and 6 high school students ranging from the eighth grade to the eleventh grade who participated in this second focus group. As with the fifth-grade group, the high school students were separated by gender as well. When I faced the students, to

my left the 6 boys were seated next to each other, and to my right the two girls were seated next to each other. Like any form of data collection, focus groups have their disadvantages and advantages. One of the most common disadvantage of focus groups is the risk of a research participant(s) dominating the conversation. To ensure this did not happen during the study, I elicited feedback from all of the students at some point during both conversations. Also, when I felt as though certain participants were dominating the conversation, I redirected the group to get everyone involved. The advantages of focus groups are the ability to collect data from a larger group, obtain a greater variety of interaction among participants, and allow for open dialogue about a specific topic (Morgan, 1997).

I conducted the observations and viewed the student work samples inside the fifth-grade classroom. There were two ways to enter Ms. McDuffie's (pseudonym) classroom. Walking inside Ms. McDuffie's classroom through the main entrance would be heading eastward. The white board was located to the left of the main entrance. The class schedule was written in the left corner of the white board. Next to the white board and near the door was the class bookshelf. There were several subject books to include social studies, mathematics, and science textbooks. During the participant observations and when I viewed the student work samples, I sat at a brown trapezoid table located to the right of the main door. The brown trapezoid table was pushed against the white wall. Above where I sat were visuals on the wall that included math multiplication posters, reading posters, and the one that really caught my attention was the poster integrating math into social studies. This poster was titled 'Algebra Election.' The poster displayed a picture of the United States with the number of electoral votes written inside each state. The directions stated that each player began by placing their counter on the state of Iowa, then the player rolled the die. Whatever number the die landed on, the player moved to a

specific state indicated on the shuffle cards. Seated to the right of me were the fifth-grade students.

The fifth-graders were seated in student desks facing each other. Erika's desk was placed behind her peers in the corner. Behind Erika's desk was a long mirror that stretched from one end of the wall, to the door located at the back of the classroom. All of the fifth-grade students were grouped together, but across from them were the fourth-grade students seated in the same arrangement as the fifth-graders. The grade levels at WTG consisted of combined classes. For example, the kindergarten and first graders were combined, second and third graders were combined, and the fourth and fifth-graders were combined. Ms. McDuffie differentiated the two groups by separating their desks and having the fourth-grade students seated together and the fifth-grade students seated together. This was very convenient when I conducted the observations since I was seated directly next to the fifth-grade students and I did not have to guess which students were in what grade level. Ms. McDuffie's desk was located to the right of the fourth-grade students. There was a separate student desk located next to Ms. McDuffie's desk where pencils, paper, and other school items were placed. On top of this desk was the class pencil sharpener. The students did not have a spot to hang their backpacks, therefore they placed them on the back of their seats. Located in the back of the classroom near the fourth-grade students was the other door. Ms. McDuffie placed a sign on that door that read "DO NOT EXIT." Although this sign was placed on the door, the teacher and students frequently exited there when going to lunch.

Participant observation is more than just watching the phenomenon in their natural setting. It involves the researcher first canvassing the setting where the observation will occur (Jorgensen, 2011). This observation includes surveying the features (in my case the classroom)

such as the physical space, the organization of things, and where things are located in the space. I arrived 1 hour prior to observing the fifth-grade students to note the physical features of the classroom. My notations included the arrangement of student desks, the teacher's desk, posters on the wall, and the whiteboard to name a few. Furthermore, there are four types of observations: 1) complete participant is when the researcher is completely engaged with those whom he or she is observing, 2) participant as observer is when the researcher participates in the activities at the site, 3) nonparticipant observer watches from a distance, and 4) complete observer occurs when the study participants are unaware they are being observed (Creswell, 2013). I wanted to be fully engulfed in this study, so I performed 3 out of the 4 types of observations. As a complete participant, I conducted 7 face-to-face observations. I simply watched the fifth-grade students' interactions and responses during social studies instruction. Next, as a participant observer I co-taught a lesson with the teacher. This was beneficial for me, as well as the teacher. During this lesson, she was attempting to relay a concept to the students but they were not comprehending the subject matter. They were inattentive, and their facial expressions indicated they were not understanding the concept. She asked me if I would intervene, and I did. I involved the students by having them participate in an activity where they had to stand in front of the classroom and work together as a group. The students were attentive, and they were eager to participate. Finally, as a nonparticipant observer, I watched the students' interactions through one virtual observation from a remote location inside the building.

Student work samples were another form of data collection that I used. After listening to the students during the focus group and observing them in their natural setting, I wanted to see if the comments matched their classroom activities. The students expressed their feelings about racial topics in social studies with a project, writing, and artwork.

Trustworthiness of Research Findings

There were several measures I used to ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings. First, I used triangulation to validate the data I collected. Each of the data collected were used to formulate the themes. By using focus groups, observations, and student work samples I was able to support the research findings. The students' candidness about social studies, primarily those concerning racial discourse, was supported during their class involvement. Their interests peaked when race or current events were discussed, but declined when other topics were taught. Additionally, their student work samples displayed their artistic expressions. All three data collection methods supported the findings.

I also used bracketing prior to conducting the study to ensure I removed my biases and experiences regarding the phenomenon. I am an African American female born and raised in the school district where the study was conducted. Not only was I a student in the public school district where the study occurred, but I also worked as an elementary teacher in this district. I did not want my opinions and feelings of the school system as both a former student and employee to hinder the research process. Once I noted my personal feelings of the social studies curriculum in chapter 1, the new information I received from the research participants were unprejudiced.

Finally, I met with my committee member before and after the data collection process. Before the collection of data, we reviewed the focus group interview questions to ensure accurate feedback from participants. We wanted to make sure that the questions asked of the participants were focused on social studies by primarily presenting questions that pertained to Blacks in a historical context. It was important that the questions were not leading to avoid influencing the participants' responses; therefore, the questions were open-ended which allowed them to go in

whatever direction they chose (Seidman, 2006). This was evident in some of the participants' responses which will be discussed further in chapter four. After I analyzed the data and identified the themes, we met again to ensure that the data collected corroborated with the research and sub-questions. Using a chart, we identified which significant statements matched the research and sub-questions. The significant statements that did not match were removed.

Data Analysis Procedures

This study consisted of Black students during face-to-face and virtual classroom observations. In addition, I conducted focus groups with 5 to 10 students in each, and I collected student work samples. The focus groups consisted of 5 to 10 Black elementary, middle, and high school students at WTG. Being in this natural setting allowed me to observe up close reactions, interview students face-to-face, review student work, and transcribe the data. I did not utilize a transcription service to interpret the data. I transcribed and analyzed all of the data collected. I followed Creswell's (2013) steps to ensure adequate analysis of the data.

1. Establish organized files to store data
2. Thoroughly read the data for key points, repetitions, and thoughtful insights
3. Describe the phenomenon of personal experiences from the students
4. Discover significant statements
5. Group statements into meanings
6. Develop a textual and structural description of how the phenomenon experienced the events that occurred
7. Establish the core of the phenomenon studied
8. Create tables, charts, and graphs to further explain the core of the phenomenon

Additionally, I used a coding process (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) to transition from codes to patterns, identify code types, cluster the code types, and establish pattern codes or themes.

Coding Analysis

The process for this coding analysis required me to use data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Data condensation allowed me to select my participants, focus intensely on their observed behaviors and attitudes, transcribe interviews, and collect other empirical materials. Data condensation was the essence of this research as it allowed me to be continuously involved in writing, gathering, and sorting the information. The data display included a model of the coding analysis process. The boxed display highlighted the flow of the analysis process. The drawing and verifying conclusions involved reviewing the codes to ensure they were assigned to the correct types. Finally, I was able to effectively summarize and analyze the data. I used the following steps from both Creswell and Moustakas, and Miles, Huberman, & Saldana to analyze the data (Creswell, 2013, p. 193):

1. First, I described my personal experiences with the phenomenon in chapter 1.
2. After listening to the audio recording several times, I developed a list of significant statements. There were a total of 94 significant statements from the elementary, middle, and high school focus groups.
3. After I identified the significant statements, I identified key words, phrases, and meanings and established a list of codes to patterns. There were 55 codes to patterns that were identified.

4. Next, I categorized the patterns into code types. I used 5 different code types: descriptors, in vivo, processes, emotions, and values. I placed each of the patterns into a code type.
5. Once each pattern was placed in a code type, I created 3 different clusters with non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements.
6. I then created themes for each of the 3 clusters created.
7. Then I wrote “what” the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon. These experiences are “textural descriptions” including verbatim examples.
8. Next, I described “how” the experience happened.
9. Finally, I wrote a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both the textural and structural descriptions. This passage is referred to as the “essence” of the experience.

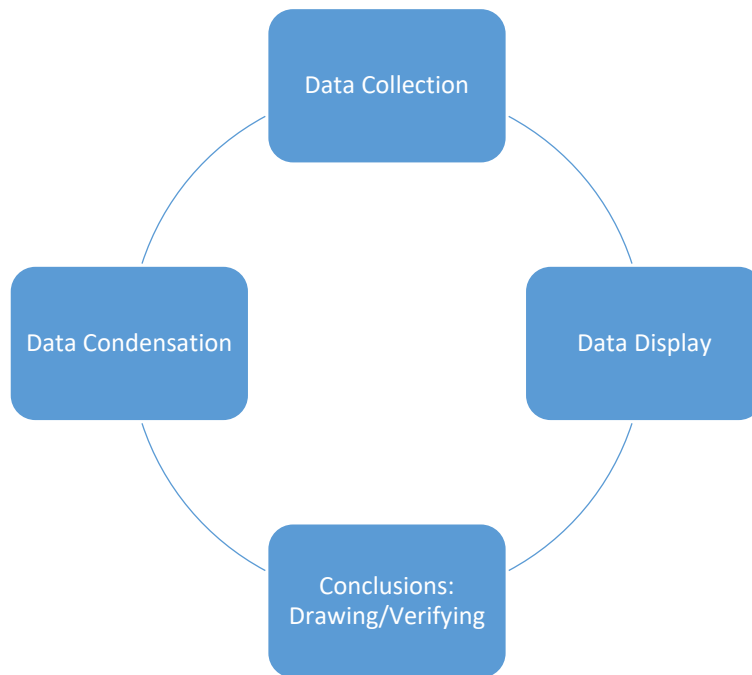


Figure 1: Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014, p. 14): Components of Data Analysis Interactive Model.

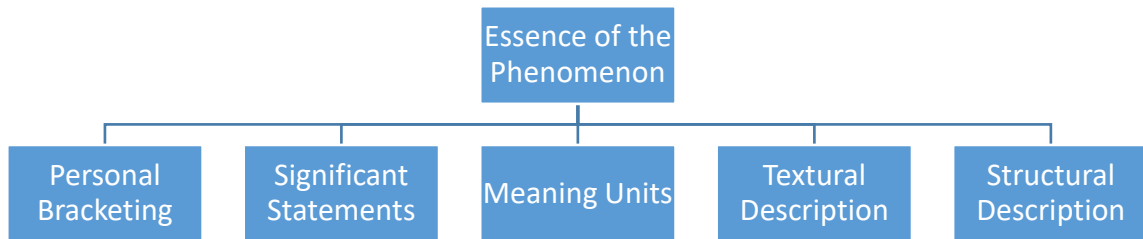


Figure 2: Creswell’s (2013, p. 207): Template for Coding a Phenomenological Study.

Focus Group Interview Questions

Focus group questions require deep thought to determine the appropriate questions to ask to solicit accurate feedback from participants (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenological studies move from watching to writing the lived experiences of the phenomenon (Van Manen, 1990). The researcher carefully outlines the interview questions to gain substantive data and elicit responses that answer the research questions (Moustakas, 1994). I designed an open-ended focus group interview protocol that allowed the participants to express their viewpoints freely. The following questions were asked of the participants:

1. Tell me something about yourself?
2. What do you like about school?
3. What are your experiences during social studies instruction?
4. Do you like social studies? Why or why not?
5. Do you like history? Why or why not?
6. If you could be one person from history, who would you be? Why?
7. Can you tell me about an historical event that occurred dealing with Black Americans? If so, what can you tell me?
8. If you could choose to be one historical Black person who would you be? Why?

Analysis of Focus Group Interviews

I organized and analyzed the data for this transcendental phenomenological study using the following steps recommended by Stevick (1971), Colaizzi (1973), and Keen (1975). By following these steps, I was able to accurately analyze the data. The steps included:

1. Fully understanding the phenomenon being studied
2. Complete specific steps for verbatim transcription
3. Create a detailed description of the textural-structural descriptions of the lived experiences as shared by the participants

Instrumentation and Research Protocols

Human Research Procedure

This research involved human subjects, therefore, approval from the UCF IRB was required for this study. In addition to receiving UCF IRB approval, I also received written approval from WTG. I met with the director and principal of WTG and received verbal approval to conduct the research study at this school. The IRB was approved on February 26, 2018. An approved IRB parental consent letter was sent home to the parents on March 12, 2018. Due to pre-scheduled school holidays, the study began 4 weeks after the IRB was approved. The research study was conducted from April 2- May 3, 2018. There were no incentives for the teachers nor students since I did not want to risk any flaws in the study. All of the participants in this study were Black fifth-grade, and middle and high school students.

Process to document consent in writing

Each parent and/or guardian received a hard copy of the informed consent. On this consent form, the parent and/or guardian was notified of the specifics regarding the research such as the purpose, the problem, the intended outcomes, the timeline of the research, and the methods used to collect data. Moreover, I ensured the verbiage in the informed consent was audience appropriate so all the parents and/or guardians could interpret the language. The parents and/or guardians had the right to discontinue their child from participating in the study. No information was hidden from the parents and/or guardians regarding the intentions for the research. I kept a copy of the informed consent forms when I was present at the research site. The parents and/or guardians were given a copy of the informed consent forms for their records as well. The participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants were protected during the research. There were minor risks to participants due to possible disclosure of confidential information. The necessary steps were taken to reduce these risks. The participants were audio recorded during the focus groups and the observations. The data was saved on my USB drive and personal laptop. To protect the participants' identity, I used pseudonyms.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided a detailed description of the methodology used to collect and analyze the data. I wanted my readers to fully understand the process by which I analyzed the data. Using a visual, I provided a chart indicating the two phenomenological data analysis methods that were incorporated. Phenomenology is designed to narrate the participants' voices through lived experiences, therefore it was important to highlight the significant statements

which ultimately led to the themes. I used these themes to expound upon and convey the experiences of Black fifth-grade elementary students during their social studies instruction.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Review of Method

The purpose of this study was to identify Black fifth-grade students' perceptions during their social studies instruction. As I researched the different types of qualitative research designs, there were five approaches I studied intensely before concluding that phenomenology was the best option for this study. While other research designs may be appropriate for future studies (I will discuss in the next chapter), a phenomenological method was the best design for this study. I employed a phenomenological study to understand the lived experiences of these participants while in their natural setting. The use of a phenomenological study allowed for several data collection methods to identify the meaning or essence of the students' experiences during social studies instruction. To gather their experiences, I collected data for a total of five weeks.

The study was conducted from April 2- May 3, 2018. The initial plan was to start collecting data immediately following approval of UCF IRB. However, due to Spring Break and waiting for more students to return their consent forms, the data collection process was pushed back to April 2. A total of fifteen participants were included in this study, but I mainly focused on seven of those participants. These seven participants were fifth-grade students. The remaining eight participants ranged from grades eighth through eleventh. All of the participants identified as Black. The focal point of the research was to describe the experiences of Black fifth-grade students during their social studies instruction, but I also wanted to capture the experiences of the middle and high school students at WTG. The first reason I wanted to get their experiences was the fact that the middle and high school students have had more social studies instruction than the elementary students. Secondly, I mentioned the U.S. history EOC

exam and the high school students would be the group to take this assessment if they were in a public school setting. I originally planned to conduct the focus group with the middle and high school students first to get a baseline of Black students' experiences during social studies instruction, but the classroom teacher did not distribute the consent forms to them until after their Spring Break. Once the consent forms were distributed, they returned them about a week later. At this juncture, it was imperative that I start the study, so I began the focus group with the fifth-grade students. The first focus group with the fifth-grade students was the first method of data collected. After the first focus group with the fifth-grade students, I conducted one virtual observation and five face-to-face observations in the fifth-grade classroom. After the fifth observation, I conducted the middle and high school focus group. After the middle and high school focus group, I conducted two more face-to-face focus groups in the fifth-grade classroom. During the observations, I also viewed the fifth-grade student work samples which included their Black history projects, a creative art assignment using multi colored pipe cleaners, and a hashtag poster activity. The focus groups and observations were audio recorded for transcribing.

The sources of data for this study included two focus groups, observations, and student work samples. Creswell (2013) identifies several data collection methods to use for a phenomenological approach. These methods include journals, observations, poetry, music, and art. Although I did not utilize all of the methods recommended by Creswell, those that were chosen gave me an in-depth understanding of Black fifth-grade students' experiences in social studies. I cannot deem one method superior to another as each of them revealed unique insights into the phenomenon being studied. The focus groups allowed the students to express themselves in an intellectual and articulate manner regarding their feelings about social studies. Specifically, when discussing Blacks in America, the participants were aware of the past and

current events. They did not hold back when it came to expressing their feelings regarding racial injustices, the government, and those who made it possible for Blacks to succeed. The middle and high school participants especially, were accustomed to engaging in dialogue on topics of race and racism, however, the focus group questions granted them the opportunity to examine institutionalized racism during the Civil Rights Movement, and institutionalized racism occurring during the present Black Lives Matter Movement. Although the elementary participants were knowledgeable of Black history, it was to no surprise that the middle and high school participants were able to delve deeper into the subject matter. The observations allowed me to further examine how the fifth-grade participants articulated their thoughts and feelings regarding social studies in their natural setting, the classroom.

The observations allowed me to view the participants in their natural setting. As a former elementary teacher, I recall how children can be easily distracted by even the slightest interruption in their routine. Classroom visitors, roaming critters, and intercom announcements are all factors that can cause distraction. As a result, I did not want the students to be distracted when they saw me in the classroom, thus fail to act as they normally would in their natural setting, so I arrived before the teacher began with the social studies instruction. When they saw me, they asked Ms. McDuffie who I was, my name, and other information about my visit. Once they moved past the preliminary questions of why I was in their space, they proceeded as normal as if I were not there. I used my early arrival to take notes of the physical features and layout of the classroom. During the face-to-face and virtual observations, I was less concerned with notating the teaching style than I was with identifying the students' responses and actions regarding the content. The participants' interest and conversations peaked during specific topics, but they displayed signs of boredom during other topics. At no point did the participants put on

a front just because I was in the classroom and neither did the teacher. This made the observation even more authentic as I was able to capture the participants displaying their normal attitudes and behaviors in the classroom. As a participant observer, I co-taught a lesson with the teacher. This occurred a few weeks after my arrival, so the participants were already familiar with me and responded as if I were their classroom teacher. Being a participant observer was beneficial for the students as well as the teacher. She was attempting to relay a concept to them and they could not grasp. I incorporated an activity I used with my former students and it was beneficial for this group of fifth-grade participants. The teacher also indicated she would use this strategy in the future to help students understand. I observed three different student work samples as another source of data collection.

The students at WTG created a Black History project in the month of February where each student selected one person. Ms. McDuffie's students selected past and present Black individuals both nationally and internationally. The students were required to research and provide facts about their individual. This information was displayed on a tri-fold poster board. Ms. McDuffie informed me that she encouraged her students to select an individual who is not normally recognized in social studies' textbooks or discussed regularly in society. She wanted to increase their knowledge and expose them to individuals who made a positive impact for Blacks. During the next activity where I observed student work samples, the participants had written a hashtag following a sentence explaining what they saw in a picture. The pictures were provided to students after a lesson on the Great Migration. These images included Blacks being beaten, young Black girls playing jump rope, a 1950s housing project in Chicago, and more. The students utilized their critical thinking skills to summarize not only what they saw in the images, but also to describe the individuals' feelings. The final activity involved an artwork that was

also based on their lesson about the Great Migration. During this activity, the students used multi colored pipe cleaners to indicate their understanding and knowledge of events such as the Great Migration, Civil Rights Movement, Black Lives Matter Movement, and freedom to name a few. The students were creative and detailed with their artwork. Furthermore, they were able to articulate why they created that specific design.

Process

Coding and Theme Development

I utilized Creswell (2013), Moustakas (1994), and Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014) phenomenological coding process to analyze the data. The researcher's process for analyzing and coding data resembles each other in many aspects. I chose to incorporate different methods for coding to ensure I extracted in-depth information from the data. First, I listened to the audio recording of the elementary participants. As I transcribed the data, I listened carefully as I wanted to capture exactly what and how the participants made their statements. I listened to the audio recording several times to notate exactness such as their hesitations, and verbal and nonverbal cues. When listening to the audio recording of the middle and high school participants I also listened several times to ensure I notated their exact expressions both verbally and nonverbally. There were two differences when comparing the middle and high school participants to the elementary participants. The first being that there were more middle and high school students, so I had to listen carefully to ensure I did not mix the statements of the participants. Also, the middle and high school participants were more passionate about the topics being discussed. As a result, I listened carefully and notated these expressions which included anger, disbelief, and empathy. With the observations and student work samples, I

reviewed the field notes and summed up the significant statements based on what I created for the focus groups.

I chunked the data into significant statements. From the 17 transcripts, 94 significant statements were drawn. Next, I summarized each significant statement in a few words. After summarizing the significant statements, I coded each based on the description it matched. There are 6 different coding methods discussed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014). Within these six different methods are 16 foundational approaches to coding. I used 2 of the 6 methods, and 5 of the 16 foundational approaches for coding analysis. Elemental methods include descriptive, in vivo, and process coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Descriptive coding summarizes the basic topic of a passage which can be later used to categorize other topics. In Vivo coding is most commonly used in qualitative research and it uses words or phrases expressed by the participants. Process coding connotes observable actions and statements. Affective methods include emotion, values, and evaluation coding. Emotion coding identifies those statements made by participants with passion either positive or negative. Values coding explores those with cultural, identity, intrapersonal, and interpersonal experiences about a specific topic. Evaluation coding is used to rate programs, policies, and organizations. I used all of the codes in the elemental methods and 2 of the 3 codes in the affective methods.

After identifying which codes would be used, I listed the words and phrases that summarized the significant statements. Next to these words and phrases, I indicated which code(s) were best suited. This process was referred to as codes to patterns (Appendix E). There were 55 codes to patterns listed. Some were identified by only one code, while others were identified by two or three codes. After listing the code to patterns, I then placed each into a code type (Appendix F). There were five code types used, including: descriptors, in vivo, processes,

emotions, and values. After grouping the words and phrases into the code categories, each were put into clusters (Appendix G). There were a total of 43 words and phrases in the three clusters combined. Cluster one had the greatest number of words and phrases at 29, and clusters two and three each had 7 phrases. Once these words and phrases were clustered, I reviewed each with thoroughness to identify a theme that matched all of them.

When reviewing cluster one, some of the words and phrases were Zora Neale Hurston, “I’m Black,” Frederick Douglass, slavery, and the Ocoee Massacre to name a few. As I reviewed these words and phrases I noticed that all of them centered on identity. This sense of identity led to the theme “I’m Black and I Need to Know My Past.” I used one of the in vivo phrases “I’m Black” and summarized the other words and phrases to develop the other part of the theme. After reading the words and phrases from cluster two and thinking about the focus group discussions, there was a need to be informed and some of the words and phrases in this cluster included this is a democracy, “Bernie Sanders,” and everyone is not racist. Expanding on one of the in vivo codes in this category, I created the theme “What’s Really Real.” Finally, cluster three revealed words and phrases such as Trump messed it up, inaccurate about slavery, and that’s just racist. The impact on identity yielded the theme “The Injustices of the present.” The themes were supported by the statements made during the focus group discussions, the face-to-face and virtual observations, and viewing of the student work samples.

Organization of Findings

Overview

In the following sections I presented an analysis of narratives from the participants. First, I included a detailed description of each theme. After the themes were described, I discussed the

content of where the themes emerged: for example the focus groups, observations, or student work samples. In the meaning making section I included a description of how the interview questions connected to the tenets of CRT. I also included a table that described the CRT tenets that were used to analyze the data. Next, I indicated how the research question and sub questions connected to the themes. After identifying how the research question and sub questions connected to the themes, I discussed how the themes connected to the tenets.

Themes Described

Each of the three themes resulted from the focus group discussions, the observations, and the student work samples. In the first theme “I’m Black and I Need to Know My History,” I reviewed each of the words and phrases and not only did they center on identity, but they also exuded pride and a yearning from these participants to know more about their past. I asked the elementary, middle, and high school participants “If you could be one person from history, who would you be and why?” All of the students from both groups with the exception of one student picked someone Black. Even the participant who chose a White person based her reasoning on issues of equality for all. Without hesitation, they chose a Black person. To my surprise, they all mentioned Black historical figures from eras such as the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement. Even those most recent individuals are people who have embarked on change and equality for all humankind. These names included Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., former President Barack Obama, Dr. Mamie Clark, Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, and Rosa Parks. All of these individuals impacted society in numerous ways. None of the participants mentioned the names of any rappers, athletes, or movie stars. Furthermore, each of them was able to articulate why they chose these individuals. In reviewing the words and phrases for this theme and thinking

about the questions I asked of them when discussing past events in history, they immediately discussed how Blacks were treated badly. Blacks suffered, Blacks received no credit, and the Ocoee Massacre were all phrases and events used to describe their thoughts about history. Lastly, one of the participants simply stated “I’m Black,” when asked about their Black History projects. These words, phrases, and meanings steered to the theme of “I’m Black and I Need to Know My Past.”

The theme “What’s Really Real,” emerged from an in vivo code from one of the high school participants. The participant discussed how his teacher talks about real issues occurring in society. The other words and phrases that helped coin this theme included everyone is not racist, Bernie Sanders, and Black Lives Matter. During the focus group, the participants discussed that the reality of everything is that not everyone is racist, but there are some people who are. Participants from both groups gave examples of how Whites were advocates for racial equality as well as Blacks. One of the elementary participants shared that Abraham Lincoln although White, tried to help Blacks. A high school participant told a story of how one of his classmate’s grandmother shared with him that Bernie Sanders was an advocate for racial equality and even marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The observations also denoted the theme “What’s Really Real,” as the students were very engaged in the classroom discussion when the lesson was about something they could relate to in their everyday lives. This level of engagement was welcomed by students who raised their hands to answer questions, listened attentively, and communicated with both their teacher and classmates about the topics discussed. On the other hand, when the teacher began to discuss topics that were not interesting to them, their engagement level quickly diminished. Students were placing their heads on the desk, fidgeting with their pencils, and talking to their peers. The realness is that when students

identified with the current events, they were attentive. When examining their student work samples, participants expressed their feelings through their artwork. During the pipe cleaner's assignment, one participant created a piece of artwork and shared that it was a representation of a Black man being beaten. These students not only discussed their real feelings about racial inequalities in the past, but they also shared that not much has changed in present society.

The participants were not afraid, nor did they shy away from sharing their true feelings about racism in America. Naively, I developed a preconceived notion that the participants would only comment about Whites being racist. My notion was debunked when the participants stated that Kanye West was a racist. I was surprised to say the least when one of the participants made this statement, especially in a world where young people admire and emulate rappers.

Furthermore, the participants did not hold back regarding their feelings about the current administration. One of the high school participants was especially very angry when discussing President Donald Trump. After discussing the president and moving on to another topic, she continued to share her feelings about him. The students were also surprised, and a little upset, when one of the participants had alternative views about President Trump compared to everyone else. Again, I admit to being surprised when he made these comments especially given the fact that the student population at WTG is 100% Black. Additionally, they also shared that the history textbooks are inaccurate when it came to the details about Black History. After reading and thinking about the words and phrases in this group, the theme "the injustices of the present" was befitting. Some of the words and phrases in this theme included untruthful about history, Trump messed it up, and Kanye West is racist.

Content of Themes

I'm Black and I Need to Know My Past

From the onset of the focus group discussions, the participants immediately talked about Black History month. I asked the participants what their experiences during social studies instruction were? Although Terrence initially stated several topics, Black History month was among one of those mentioned:

We learn about maps, the United States, Black History month...Black history people, and presidents, and capitals.

I wanted him to explore more so I asked Terrence what they learned about maps and capitals. He provided me with one or two words describing the maps and capitals, but he went back to discussing Black History month:

We learned about our capitals and um... other capitals and we had to write... we had a Black History project we had to do and we um...we had a test on some of the Black history people and we had one test on Abraham Lincoln.

The participant referenced the Black history project twice without me even asking about their projects. The initial question was a general one where I wanted them to share their experiences about social studies to include all topics. Evident from the two statements provided by Terrence, social studies was Black history based on his initial responses to the question what are your experiences during social studies instruction? Continuing with the topic on Black history, Erika stated:

I had Patricia Bath...she was the first Black female surgeon.

Initially Erika did not say much, so shared very little about her Black history project. Larry continued the conversation about the Black history projects. At first he was unsure about the name of his person:

I had Dr. Charles Drew and he invented the golf club.

The co-investigator asked the participant to repeat the name of the person he researched for his Black history project and he said again Dr. Charles Drew. The co-investigator informed the participant that Dr. Charles Drew did something else that was very important. The participant was unable to think of the other invention. In the meantime, Tyrone shared that his person was Dr. Kenneth Clark:

He was the first one to play with a Black doll, he didn't want the White doll.

By this time, Larry remembered the name of his person:

It wasn't him [Dr. Charles Drew], I can't remember his name...George something...he invented the golf tee. I was thinking of Charles Drew because I had to do a project on him in the fourth-grade, [paused] Oh I remember his name now it was George Franklin.

I researched the person the participant was referring to and his name is George Franklin Grant. He was the first African American professor at Harvard, a dentist, and he invented the wooden golf tee. While the student was unable to recall the complete facts of his Black history person, he was able to remember at least one fact about him. Others included people such as Mamie Clark, Jesse Owens, Juan E. Gilbert, and Mary McLeod Bethune. The participants were not only excited to learn about their past, but it was also a need. Erika shared this need:

It was interesting because we was learning history and I wanted to know more about the past because I'm Black...I just wanna learn more about it just to know what happened back then. It's exciting to learn about the past because it's things that happened to Blacks.

This theme addressed the participants' identity. DeAndre shared the importance of recognizing his Black identity to identify who people were and the contributions they made. In fact, when I asked the students their favorite subject, DeAndre stated history:

I like history because you can see like who was like slaves...I mean not slaves, but like your ancestors like who discovered mostly anything.

Many of them echoed similar thoughts about their likes for history, such as Malik's thoughts on absorbing information from the past:

I mean I feel like it's information to absorb and just know where you came from and know where other people came from and know how times were before now and know like...don't take nothing for granted because it wasn't always like this.

The participants discussed specific individuals in history who impacted society in the past, as well as the present. Both Malik and DeAndre shared that if they could choose to be one person from the past it would be Dr. Martin Luther King. Malik stated:

I would be Martin Luther King Jr.

Laughing but serious, DeAndre interjected and stated:

Man you took my answer [participants laughed] ...I would want to be him because he played a big part in where we are today and if I was him...I mean I like the choice that he made and the speeches that he gave...I mean I could be Malcolm X or somebody, but I'm gonna go with Martin Luther King.

Terrence also mentioned Dr. King:

Dr. Martin Luther King he's the one that ended slavery and he had the speeches and he told the speech about "I Have A Dream" and he kept fighting for Black people. His speech said we all can get along and to stop segregation.

Asia stated that she would be Rosa Parks:

I would be Rosa Parks because I wouldn't got off the bus [participants laughed]. I mean that's just very racist it's just racist why she can't sit where she wanna sit...you don't have to separate the Whites from the Blacks that's just not right.

Marquis shared a name that is not often mentioned in history textbooks or society:

Well I really don't know too much about um Marcus Garvey, but I have a friend that talk about him a lot and I know he did a lot for us.

These comments shed a positive light on Black history, however, the participants also discussed how the events of the past were somber and unjust towards Blacks.

I asked the elementary, middle, and high school students to tell me about a historical event that occurred dealing with Black Americans. Terrence was the only participant who mentioned a festive event:

Zora Neale Hurston festival...it's a person and she is African American and she made books about what happened back in the day and so they made a festival and they have African clothes and stuff every year.

Tyrone and the other participants mentioned events surrounding slavery such as migration, fighting for freedom, and mistreatment towards Blacks:

It was like kinda bad because the things that Blacks did White people...they would go back and kinda change everything...they got taken away from their family or if they did something wrong, they would get tied up to a tree and the Whites would hit them with a rope...in the movie Roots it was this Black man they went and they cut the man feet off.

Malik felt as though the history textbooks failed to mention everything about Black history. He continued by stating that textbooks only mention some Blacks in history and not all of them. The recognition of all Blacks who fought for racial justice were equally important:

Well of course slavery, but as far as good I mean you can say the people like um Harriet Tubman, people who rebelled against all of that, even people that's not in the history books. I'm quite sure it's people out there that's...that's um... rebelled and did a lot of stuff for us that's rebellious and they...we probably don't even know their names or they don't want to put it in the history books.

Marquis then said:

Um what about that um that bus ride.

Malik stated:

Oh the bus boycott?

It is worth noting here that the participants in the elementary focus group also referred to this event as the bus boycott. Neither group specifically said the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This further supports Malik's statement that not everything is discussed in history textbooks. Although the Montgomery Bus Boycott is a well-known historical event, perhaps it is not

mentioned as often as other events in history textbooks. Jamarcus then mentioned the Ocoee Massacre. I asked him to explain further:

It was basically where White people killed Black people. They would hang them.

Malik continued about the Ocoee Massacre:

I was with him [Jamarcus] at the time when his grandmother told us about it... she showed us online and it's a real thing, but it's something that's not in the textbook... Another thing they did that's not in the textbooks, they took the [Black] babies and then they just played with them they threw the babies like they were toy dolls until they killed them.

Michael stated:

History is good but some of the stuff like some of the stuff I noticed that they don't be telling the truth about. They try to put sugar on top of it.

I asked Michael to clarify who the they he was referring to was and he clarified the history textbooks:

Um they basically sugar coat stuff about what happened back then during slavery. To me they kinda make it seem like Black people had a choice to come here and they didn't. The White man made them come over here. I'm pretty sure if they had a choice they [Black people] would have wanted to stay in Africa with their families. It's just like if someone came to America and tried to take one of us from our family we wouldn't like it. That's what I feel like with how the White people just kidnapped Black people from Africa and brought them to America.

Additionally, during the face-to-face and virtual observations, the participants were engaged and “interested,” exact word used by Erika when discussing why she likes to learn about Black history. During social studies instruction, Ms. McDuffie’s lessons were on numerous topics to include geography, history, and economics. When discussing Black students, I observed the participants being completely attentive. One of the lessons centered on the Great Migration, specifically discussing Blacks who migrated to Chicago. Ms. McDuffie discussed how many Blacks left the south for northern cities such as Chicago. She asked them why they left, and Heaven responded:

They wanted to leave due to slavery um they wanted freedom and they didn't want the White man to beat them anymore.

All of the participants knew that Barack Obama was from Chicago. She provided them with primary sources of Blacks who migrated from the south to Chicago. Ms. McDuffie had given them instructions to look at the pictures carefully. After they viewed the pictures, they wrote a hashtag symbol with a few words summarizing the images. They were so engaged with this activity that a few of the students did not circulate the primary sources fast enough, causing some of them to ask if they would hurry with the pictures. Ms. McDuffie discussed some of the images in a whole group conversation. One primary source depicted a Black man taking a picture with his family. She asked the students why they were not smiling. Tanesha stated they were miserable. She displayed another primary source of two White police officers beating a Black man. She continued by stating that in addition to being beaten by police officers, Blacks were also stoned. My next visit included the virtual observation. As a nonparticipant observer, I noticed the students were very involved with their hands-on activity.

The participants put much thought into their activity. Although this was an independent assignment, they were talking among each other and sharing different ideas. They were tasked with creating an image using multi colored pipe cleaners detailing their feelings about the Great Migration. The participants were not allowed to use more than three different colors. Red represented anger or violence, yellow represented happiness or joy, purple represented royalty or power, green represented growth, and orange represented determination. The theme "I'm Black and I need to know my past," was symbolized through Tyrone's image (Figure 7). He stated that his image was a representation of three slaves who got stuck on a rope (purple) while they were trying to carry water (orange) migrating north (green). Another work sample highlighting this theme involved the participants writing a hashtag for different pictures they observed:

Erika- *#Whites stonig [sic] black man to death*

Tanesha- *#hashtag a man getting beat up by another man, #hashtag people that esaped [sic] slayfery [sic]*

Tyrone- *#upgrading the migration to move*

Terrence- *#slavery and poor*

Larry- *#two White people in a house beating a black person*

The theme “I’m Black and I need to know my past,” illuminated the participants’ feelings about history. They shared both good and bad events chronicling Black history. I never had to lead them to a discussion about Black history, they went there on their own. It is during the second theme that the participants discussed democracy and equality for all races.

What’s Really Real

When I posed the question asking them for their experiences during social studies instruction, Malik said:

World history... World history... World history like you learn about different things, he teach [Mr. Godfrey], he teach you so much about World History. He tell us a lot about what’s really real, he won’t sugar coat nothing...like he’ll tell us what’s actually gonna be out there in the world.

I asked Malik what are some of the things Mr. Godfrey tells you that’s real:

Well alright... I’m going to the parts that I like the most so when he tells us what we need to have...hold on let me explain...slow down [participant speaking to himself]. He’ll tell us like what we need to do for college our future and all that type of stuff. He’ll tell us you know that we need to focus and all that different type of stuff like that. As far as like history goes he’ll tell us um... he’ll teach us about like Adolf Hitler and all that other stuff like slavery you know how our ancestors um...had to get us to this point and how we shouldn’t take it for granted and stuff like that.

Malik continued with a discussion about the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM):

I mean I guess it’s important [Black Lives Matter Movement], but me personally it’s not like it’s something that will make me more serious about it like a racist person or

something cuz that's what most people who experienced that type of stuff they'll get more serious about it and more emotional, but like if you think about it in our heads we never been through nothing...we can take it serious, but it's not like we know the back story behind all of it...the emotional feelings for it that will really make us you know more traumatized by it I guess.

While Malik had a difficult time articulating what he meant by the above statement, as he continued it was clear that he was referring to not relating to the BLM since he did not know anyone personally who was killed as a result of racial motivations. Following Malik's comments, Asia shared that she had first-hand experience when it came to gun violence. Darius asked if her family member was killed by a Black or White person, but she never answered. It appeared as though she was sharing a personal experience of gun violence involving Black on Black crime:

Well...my cousin got killed...All the Black boys getting killed for nothing...people just get guns and don't know how to act, they just think that just cuz they have gun they can do whatever they want with it. They just go out shooting [innocent Black] people for no reason, especially when they ain't messing with nobody.

At this point the participants were quiet and I could tell they were thinking about Asia's comment. Nia expressed:

That's sad how your cousin (Asia) was killed...That's messed up, and it's sad that Black people keep getting killed by White people for no reason at all. I mean that's just messed up. Why they keep killing us like that. They wouldn't like it if a bunch of Black people started killing their kids and their mommas and daddies...Then they would want to put us [Black people] in jail for killing them. That's just racist.

Malik agreed with Nia that Blacks were killed unjustly by Whites, but he also made it a point to say that not all White people were racist:

You gotta realize that not everybody is racist...What's the person that ran for um president with Trump and them it was a old White man.

I knew Malik was referring to Bernie Sanders, but I wanted to see if the students would answer. After no responses, I informed Malik the individual he was referring to was Bernie Sanders:

Yeah yeah Bernie Sanders... He was actually um in jail with Martin Luther King and them. That was him the same person, he was in jail with them in shackles and I didn't even know that so if more people would have known about that, they probably would have chose Bernie Sanders to be president. You KNOW he not racist because back in the day he was with Dr. Martin Luther King in shackles getting beat with them and if more people knew that they probably would have chose him because people didn't really trust Hillary Clinton too because they said she was in scandals and stuff...if more people knew about that they probably would have chose Bernie Sanders.

DeAndre was surprised to learn that Bernie Sanders marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.:

Dang...Bernie Sanders was there with King and them? Dang I didn't know that man...that's crazy.

The word “crazy” in most instances signify someone or something that is aggressive, mentally deranged, or some type of negative connotation. However, DeAndre’s use of the word “crazy” means someone or something that is unique, unusual, and creative. In other words, the word “crazy” used in this instance is good rather than bad. Erika also believed that some White people equally fought for racial justice just as Blacks. When I asked the participants if they could be one person from history who would they be and why, Erika stated:

Abraham Lincoln because he actually tried to help Black people and stop slavery. I think he like changed history because he actually like... stopped some of the violence, but some White people were nasty.

The participants began to discuss President Trump and what they deemed to be unfair by his actions.

I used one of the in vivo codes to create the theme “What’s Really Real,” based on Malik’s comment about his teacher, Mr. Godfrey providing his students with a multiple perspectives approach on historical events in the past. The students engaged in a conversation

about President Trump as a follow up to one of the questions I asked them. They employed their knowledge of American government and concluded that President Trump had limitations to his decision making. When I asked the participants if they could be one person from history who would they be and why, Jamarcus stated that he would be Barack Obama:

I would be Obama cuz he did a lot for our country. He did...he did more than what Donald Trump doing right now.

Asia stated:

And it's like he just so...he acting like he really wanna help the Black people, but then when he get in the chair it...it turns. He wanna start wars, he wanna start this, he don't want China to send nothing down here, nothing...he wanna turn us back to slaves.

The participants erupted with chatter. At this point Malik was on the edge of his chair waiting to jump in and say something. He sort of laughed, but it was more of a smirk as if, let me tell you “What’s Really Real.” Before he could speak, DeAndre commented:

Well I don't think he can do that because everybody in this generation they really got their own minds so if it ever come down to that, it's gonna be a lot of people dead.

Malik then stated:

I don't think, I don't think he could do that because this is a democracy. He don't get the final say because you got Congress and you got um the voice of the people. He can't do that, he can't do that if he wanted to.

The participant observations with the fifth-grade participants, also revealed findings to support the theme, “What’s Really Real.” The elementary participants implicitly shared their viewpoints of realism from classroom discussions. During one of the face-to-face observations, Ms. McDuffie discussed states with the students. She asked them what were some states that have a desert. The participant responses were California, Wyoming, Nevada, Idaho, and Montana. The conversation continued, and Ms. McDuffie asked the students what are some races of people in these states. Heaven responded by saying rednecks. Heaven stated that she

had visited a family member in Montana and she remembered seeing a lot of White people. As a fifth-grader it is probably safe to say her source of information is mainly from family, peers, and her teacher. Either way, her reality of people who live in desert states are rednecks. Ms. McDuffie continued the conversation about geography with a discussion on international trade. The students were very interested in the topic of trade and barter. Ms. McDuffie asked the participants how important was India to the United States of America. Erika responded that Americans needed the Indians weave. In Erika's cultural, hair weave is an important commodity for Black females. Tanesha stated:

If they stop selling their weave girls are gonna go crazy...

Whereas DeAndre referred to "crazy," as someone or something that is good, Tanesha's definition of "crazy," is a little on the contrary. While it does not refer to someone or something who displays aggressive attributes, it is however, not good. For Erika and Tanesha, hair weave is a relatable reality. Authentic Intellectual Work comprises what students learn in the classroom and apply to their everyday lives. It is important that social studies teachers integrate curriculum based learning with real world experiences and knowledge. Ms. McDuffie incorporated geography and economics and the participants were able to discuss how something in their everyday lives apply to supply and demand. One of the participants' artwork also symbolized what is real to him.

When discussing the activity with the pipe cleaners, Larry's image was a reflection of what he perceived the world to be today. I asked him to explain his image:

This is a guy with multiple feelings and wants to help the poor people. He's going to help everyone get an education. He's mixed because he's like Frederick Douglass.

Larry's image had an orange (determination) head. He had two long and yellow (happiness or joy) pieces on one side, and one purple (royalty or power) and green (growth)

piece on the other side. His body was yellow, but his arms were purple and his feet were green (Figure 1). Terrance's image was little different:

This is a man lying on the ground and a White man beating him...I created this because it reminds me of what Black men go through and what they went through back then.

Terrence's reality of "What's Really Real," is that Black men are beat and left for dead. I asked him to explain his color scheme. He stated that the purple represented his power, the orange represented his determination to fight the White people, to keep them from killing him, and the red represented the violence of the White people, but the man who was beaten was also angry with himself that he could not fight back. He informed me that he only used a few pipe cleaners to represent the man's weak body. This theme encompassed different meanings for the participants. Some of them believed that "What's Really Real," is that not everyone is racist, and Blacks were not the only individuals fighting for equality. Other implications of "What's Really Real," were that Blacks are treated unfairly and do not hold the same equal rights as Whites.

The Injustices of the present

The participants were vocal when it came to expressing their feelings about current events in society. These discussions mainly centered on President Trump and their beliefs that he was not representative of Black people. While all of the participants shared adverse opinions regarding President Trump, one of the participants did not understand why everyone was so critical of him. When I asked the participants if they could be one person from history, who would it be and why, Larry stated:

Barack Obama because he was the person that like kinda did things for people, but after Trump came in he messed things up for Blacks and for Blacks to do.

Jamarcus stated:

It make me feel like... like it make me have I won't say hatred but like it make me feel like some way because like Donald Trump he not doing anything for us like Obama did. He [Obama] did more than what Donald Trump doing, he was more active, Donald Trump he just sit back. Like Obama he would help Black people.

DeAndre stated:

Alright why they support Donald Trump...a lot of them really really have to listen to the government it's not like they wanna support him they ain't got no option. They really don't wanna vote for him, but the government got too much power.

Asia stated:

I feel he [Donald Trump] he's just full of lies and he made all these people vote for him and he told them what he gonna do. Donald Trump...I mean Obama he did more for them, he did Obama Care for the older women, he [Donald Trump] ain't do nothing and stuff like that. He trying to start back a war with other people and then he trying um...he trying to take food stamps and give them food boxes. If you got 7 or 10 kids what that box gonna do for you and your kids, that's just crazy...He don't wanna see no Black people succeed.

Darius was quiet during most of the focus group discussion, however after hearing the continuous negative comments about President Trump he stated:

I don't know what he [Donald Trump] is doing wrong

The participants laughed, chattered, and Nia even acted as though she was going to fall out of her chair from disbelief of his comment. Asia then said to Darius:

You must don't watch the news

Darius smiled at his peers and said:

He ain't doing nothing

DeAndre responded:

You're right, he ain't doing nothing

All of the participants including Darius laughed at DeAndre's response. Darius was quiet during most of the focus group interview. He was slouched in his chair during the entire session.

I wanted him to provide more details in regards to his viewpoints about President Trump. He simply stated:

He good...he straight

Asia, who was mostly quiet during the session directed her statement to Darius:

Can I say something...well if we go to war then that mean you goanna be going with him cuz it is something wrong with him.

As a visitor at WTG for a little over a month, the environment yielded that of a warm family atmosphere. Darius did not appear to be bothered or upset with his peers' statement, but I did remind them of Malik's statement earlier during the focus group regarding America as a democracy. I further informed the participants that everyone has a right to their own beliefs and opinions about others.

The participants not only thought that Whites displayed racial inequalities, they also felt the same about some Blacks. I asked them what they thought of Kanye West's statements regarding President Trump. DeAndre stated:

Kanye West I think he racist. I don't think he like Black people. He'll try to be friends with White person more than he'll try to be friends with the Black person.

Michael who was also quiet during most of the focus group stated:

I don't get Kanye West sometimes, it's a lot of Black people like that though, he rap good but when it come down to speeches...when it come down to speeches, it don't make sense.

Malik stated:

When it come down to Kanye West, I don't really listen to him no way, but like if he...if that's what he wanna do I guess it is America so everybody get their own opinion so if he feel like doing or saying that then that's him and that's it.

During the final face-to-face observation, Ms. McDuffie's class lesson was on political posters. She had introduced the students to terms and showed them pictures the day prior to build their background knowledge. She not only discussed the injustices in America, but she also shared with the participants how some people who live in other countries are treated unfairly. She explained to them that some children were unable to attend school as they were. She asked them what the consequences would be if they did not follow the government's rule. Terrence stated that if they did not comply, the government would chop off their hands.

Meaning Making

Tenets of Critical Race Theory

In this section, I provided a brief overview of the tenets of CRT. Table 1 included a description of how the interview questions connected to the tenets of CRT. Not all of the interview questions connected to the tenets, for example, the first two questions, 1) tell me something about yourself, and 2) what do you like about school were included as icebreakers to create a comfortable and welcoming environment for the participants (Morgan, 1997).

The second table lists the tenets of CRT with specific examples from the data analysis. I mined the data to identify which tenets of CRT matched the participants' responses. Although there are five tenets of CRT, I only used four to analyze the data. Centrality of race and racism in society recognizes that race is a permanent component in society. This tenant acknowledges the first Africans who were kidnapped and forced to America for labor. The participants' discussion about Black historical events such as slavery, suffering beatings, and being hung falls within this tenet. The next tenant, challenges to dominant ideology, challenges individuals opposing racial equality. Educators are encouraged to integrate lessons on multiple perspectives

to expose students to all viewpoints. It is during this tenet where the participants discussed interests in learning about history, yearning to know more about their ancestors, and even including family members in the process. The next tenet, Whites as recipients of racial remedy, focuses on their concern of self-interest. This tenet proclaims that Whites are only concerned with helping Blacks if they benefit from the cause. An example of this tenet from the data discussed how Whites would take the credit for what was invented by Blacks. Finally, the centrality of experiential knowledge assumes that people who truly understand racism have experienced racial injustices. Examples were given of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Marcus Garvey, Rosa Parks, and others.

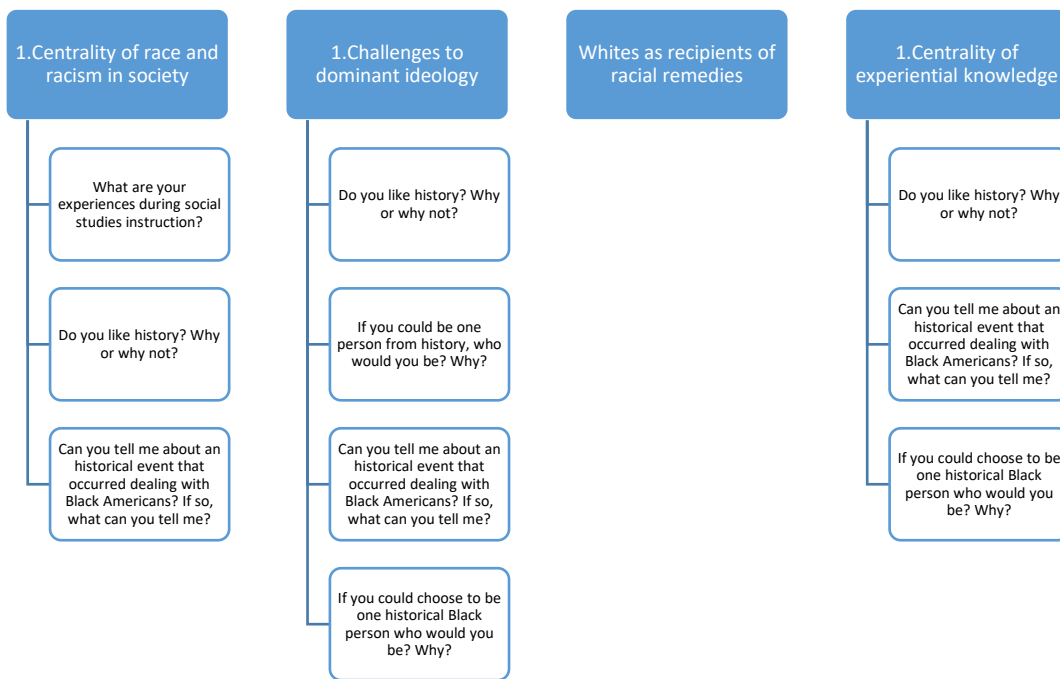


Figure 3: Tenets of CRT and interview questions

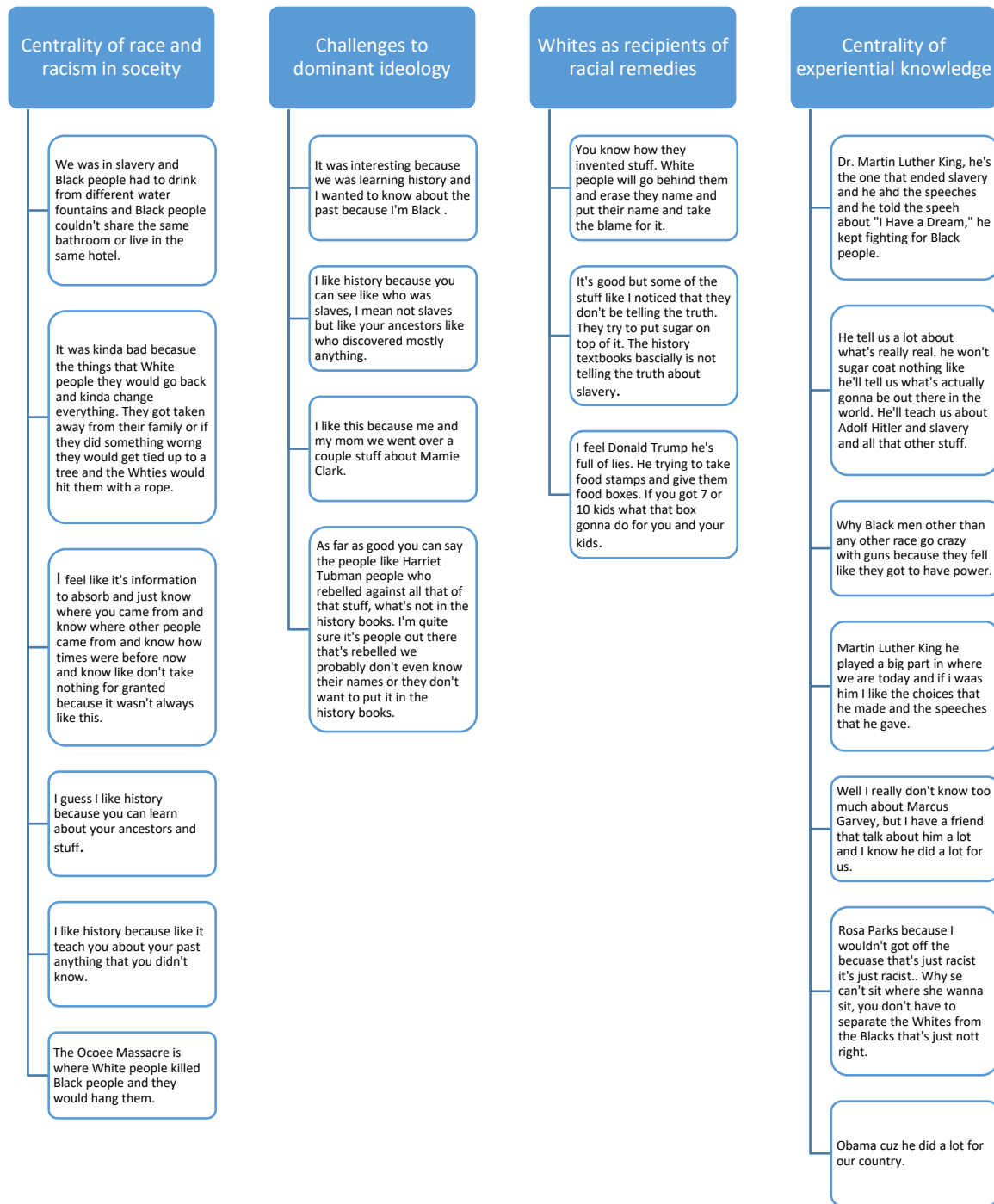


Figure 4: Tenets of CRT with data

Research Questions Connected to Themes

Research Question 1

The research question for this study asks, “What are the learning experiences of Black students in an elementary fifth grade classroom during social studies instruction?” The research question connected to all three of the themes. The first theme, “I’m Black and I need to know my past,” highlighted what these students were learning in their social studies classrooms. Ms. McDuffie’s lessons were inclusive of other racial groups, but a major part of the curriculum focused on Black history. Even outside of the curriculum, Ms. McDuffie discussed real world examples so her students could connect what they learned inside the classroom to events outside of the classroom. Furthermore, the participants’ Black History Projects displayed their knowledge of historical Black figures. Each participant presented facts about their specific person in Black history. All of them expressed their enjoyment of the project as it exposed them to learning about different individuals in Black history. Most of the individuals they researched were people in Black history that are not frequently discussed in textbooks, or in society: including the Ocoee Massacre. The participants relied on different channels to receive their information about Black history. These channels included storytelling from friends and family, movies, and teachers. The participants also recognized the significance of their past by keeping it real.

The theme “What’s Really Real,” highlighted what participants were really learning during social studies instruction. They understood that Blacks were not the only individuals fighting for racial equality, but Whites were as well. Even when I asked the participants if they could choose to be one person from history Black or White, who would it be, Erika stated Abraham Lincoln. She valued the contributions of all people who fought for equality. They

truly believed that not everyone was racist, but they also understood that racism was still very prevalent. The participants even recognized the realness of some Blacks who were racist, and present-day injustices.

For the “The injustices of the present,” the participants recognized and appreciated Blacks and Whites who fought for their freedoms, but they expressed their concern for racism yet still today. Discussions surrounded the inaccuracies and omission of Black people and events in history textbooks. They contended people will be misled to think a certain way, thus creating injustices. Participants used terms such as rednecks, racist, and hatred to refer to people in today’s society. The pendulum did not always swing to racist Whites either, it also swung to Blacks as well who treated other Blacks, or people in society, as a wholly unjust.

Sub Question 1

Research sub question 1 stated, “How do these experiences influence student perceptions of social studies?” In the first theme, “I’m Black and I need to know my past,” the participants were proud of their Black heritage. All of the participants, with the exception of one, desired to be a Black person from history. Furthermore, they wanted to be a Black person from centuries ago opposed to someone from present society. Only one participant said they would choose Barack Obama. When these students thought of social studies, Black history resonated with them. For example, when I asked them the question, “do you like history, why or why not,” many of them responded with something relating to Black history. I asked them a general question about history, nothing specific about Black history, but that was their immediate response. Although these experiences developed pride and unashamed feelings about Black history, they still believed injustices were ongoing.

In the state of Florida, history is a discipline within the social studies field of study. Thus, referring to history is also referring to social studies. When examining the theme, “The injustices of the present,” the participants shared that history textbooks were untruthful about certain events and they chose what they wanted to publish. They still had a wealth of knowledge about Black historical events based on what they learned from their teachers, family, and friends. Malik even stated that a lot of Blacks performed heroic acts, but the history textbooks have silenced their voices. The participants are made aware of these silenced voices from the instruction provided by their teachers such as Ms. McDuffie and Mr. Godfrey. Ms. McDuffie encouraged her students to not only read about these events, but also to take a stance for what is right in their actions.

Sub question number 2-B stated, “How do the perceptions of social studies instruction influence student reactions?” This sub question related to the theme “I’m Black and I need to know my past,” by having the participants share their experiences of Black history with Ms. McDuffie. The students did this through participation in the focus group, classroom discussions, and their student work samples. As an African American educator, Ms. McDuffie shared her experiences with her Black students and they responded with examples of what occurred with them or their family members. Ms. McDuffie’s students were comfortable discussing Black history with her, and the ways in which Blacks were treated unfairly.

When examining the theme “What’s Really Real,” and how it connected to sub question 2-B, the participants’ reacted negatively when they learned how Blacks were treated unfairly.

This example was evident when Tyrone responded to my question asking if he liked history:

It was like kinda bad because the things that Blacks did White people...they would go back and kinda change everything...they got taken away from their family or if they did something wrong, they would get tied up to a tree and the Whites would hit them with a rope...in the movie Roots it was this Black man they went and they cut the man feet off.

However, some of the participants acknowledged that Whites played an integral role in fighting for racial justice for Blacks. Both Erika and Malik recognized this reality:

Abraham Lincoln because he actually tried to help Black people and stop slavery. I think he like changed history because he actually like... stopped some of the violence.

Yeah yeah Bernie Sanders... He was actually um in jail with Martin Luther King and them. That was him the same person, he was in jail with them in shackles and I didn't even know that so if more people would have known about that, they probably would have chose Bernie Sanders to be president. You KNOW he not racist because back in the day he was with Dr. Martin Luther King in shackles getting beat with them and if more people knew that they probably would have chose him because people didn't really trust Hillary Clinton too because they said she was in scandals and stuff...if more people knew about that they probably would have chose Bernie Sanders.

The theme, "The injustices of the present," connected with sub question number 2-B as participants were vocal about the injustices in present day society. The participants shared anger about how Blacks are currently treated. This anger was mostly aimed at the current administration and the beliefs that Black people had no voice. They felt as though their opinions no longer counted, and everything would be one sided. During one of my observations, Ms. McDuffie misspoke and asked the participants "what kind of world do we live in?" Heaven replied, "Donald Trump's world." While Ms. McDuffie thought about the response and rephrased her question, it was clear from Heaven's response that overall daily instruction not only lead her to this response, but also made her comfortable to say it aloud in class.

Table 2

CRT and attributes defined

Critical Race Theory	Definitions	Attributes
Critical Race Theory	A theoretical framework that focuses on the development of equal opportunities for racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.	Equality, inclusivity, counter-storytelling
Centrality of race and racism in society	Race is a permanent component of society. Racism will exist in every aspect of American life to include politics, the healthcare system, and indeed education.	Slavery, hatred, bigotry, unjust, torture
Challenges to dominant ideology	Teachers integrate lessons on multiple perspectives, but also provide opportunities for Blacks and other minorities to excel academically. Confronts the laws, policies, and institutions that purports equality for all citizens.	Creativity, new ideas, sharing experiences
Whites as recipients of racial remedies	Whites are only concerned with their own self-interest and are only interested in the needs of Blacks if they (Whites) benefit from the cause.	Stolen ideas, rudeness, unwillingness to share, selfish ambitions
Centrality of experiential knowledge	People who truly understand racism are those who have been victims of the act. Experiential knowledge is used in many forms to share how racism has shaped people, events, and society.	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Emmett Till, Medgar Evers, Trayvon Martin
Commitment to social justice	The focus is on the commitment to social justice in all forms of society to include politics, the healthcare system, and education. This commitment involves the collaborative effort of all stakeholders such as educators, teacher educators, policy-makers, governmental officials, and others.	Equal opportunity, culturally responsive teaching, due process

Themes Connected to Tenets

Theme 1 connected to the tenets through an expression of Black history and the participants' identifying with the past. The first tenet, centrality of race and racism in society, focuses on recognizing and emphasizing that race will always be etched in history. From the kidnapped African slaves transported to America to present day racial inequality, this tenet

unequivocally highlights this fact. The participants shared this sentiment with discussions about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Barack Obama, and slavery. These were just a few terms used to illustrate that racism exists in every aspect of American life. The tenet “challenges to dominant ideology” is connected to theme 1 through the multiple perspectives taught in Ms. McDuffie’s classroom. It also allowed the participants to research and discuss Black historical figures. Whites as recipients of racial remedies was discussed during the focus group when Terrence stated that White people would steal the ideas of Black inventors. The participant’s examples of Blacks who experienced racial injustice, beatings, unlawful arrests, and fatalities are all connected to the fourth tenet, centrality of experiential knowledge. Good or bad, individuals such as Juan E. Gilbert, Marcus Garvey, and Dr. George Franklin were all mentioned by the participants as Black historical figures who at some point experienced acts of racism.

The theme “What’s Really Real,” connected to the first tenet, centrality of race and racism in society, during the discussion of equality for the poor. Asia shared with the group the inequalities for public assistance such as food stamps. Although she never really clarified, when discussing the Black Lives Matter Movement, Asia expressed her disgust when it came to Black males getting killed by guns. During social studies instruction, the participants learned that this is a democracy which was explained by both Malik and DeAndre. These teachings challenge the dominant ideology mentioned in the second tenet. The fourth tenet, centrality of experiential knowledge, makes it worth noting that Whites also fought for racial equality were victims of racist acts. The participants shared this example when discussing Bernie Sanders and Abraham Lincoln.

The theme “the injustices of the present” connected with the first tenet since history textbooks provide inaccurate facts about historical events and racism continues to persist in present day society. The second tenet, challenges to dominant ideology, continues to integrate lessons of CRT. The fourth tenet, centrality of experiential knowledge, is pulled from this theme when the participants gave examples of Barack Obama helping people. The implication was that he experienced racial injustices, therefore it was important to help individuals who resembled himself.

Conclusion

This chapter presented findings of *A phenomenological study of Black fifth grade students' perceptions of social studies*. The main focus was on Black fifth grade students. However, I also conducted a focus group with middle and high school students as well to ascertain their perceptions of social studies. After collecting and analyzing the data, three themes emerged from this analysis. The first theme “I’m Black and I need to know my past,” provided detailed examples of people, places, and events involving Black history. The participants’ knowledge of the government and historical and current events addressed the second theme “What’s Really Real.” They shared examples of what they learned inside and outside of their social studies classroom to convey that although they are young, they are well versed when it comes to topics of race and racism. “The injustices of the present” theme emphasized the participants’ awareness that history textbooks fail to provide information from a multiple perspectives viewpoint. These experiences have not only challenged them to stand up against racial injustices, but also to strive academically so they too can make a difference in the world.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of my study, as well as support and reject previous studies related to the research topic. I discuss how this research study benefits K-12 social studies classrooms in private schools. I also dive into my positionality after the research study. Next, I discuss the implications of my study in an elementary social studies classroom, and while it often receives the least amount of teaching time, it is equally important that primary students are exposed to its content as well. Finally, I discuss how this study can be expanded in future studies. The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to answer the following questions:

1. What are the learning experiences of Black students in an elementary fifth grade classroom during social studies instruction?
2. Sub Questions:
 - a. How do these experiences influence student perceptions of social studies instruction?
 - b. How do the perceptions of social studies instruction influence student reactions?

The main focus of this study involved seven fifth grade students. I utilized focus groups, observations, and student work samples as my sources of data collection. I also conducted a focus group with eight middle and high school students. Initially my plan was to conduct the middle and high school focus group before collecting data from the fifth-grade students. However, due to time constraints and waiting for more participants to return their parental consent forms, I conducted the focus group for the middle and high school students after the

fifth-grade students. After collecting data from the focus groups and through observations, there were 46 pages of transcriptions analyzed yielding 94 significant statements. I identified 55 codes to patterns and reduced them to clusters. After several re-reads of the words and phrases in each cluster, I created themes based on the relationship of each. The themes are “I’m Black and I need to know my past,” “What’s really real,” and “the injustices of the present.” Data were revealed in chapter IV of this research study based on the focus group interviews, observations, and student work samples.

Data Supports previous research

Critical Race Theory

When examining CRT in the classroom, it contends that engaging students in racial discourse in the P-12 classroom promotes student awareness of the injustices within society. From its inception, CRT focused on developing equal opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds, socioeconomic class, racial, ethnic, and cultural groups (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). It is imperative that teachers incorporate lessons on multiple perspectives in P-12 classrooms. Elementary teachers in particular need to ensure that students are taught lessons from varying viewpoints. Examples include inviting guest speakers such as immigrants, showing films that depict race and racism in society, and visiting local and national museums (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001). Additionally, having students participate in hands-on activities, read alouds, and looking at pictures all increase their interest in social studies. Thus, when it comes to social studies, educators must develop innovative and fun lessons that the students will be excited to learn (McCall, 2011). Incorporating these multiple perspectives will promote the use of the CRT tenets. The second tenet of CRT, which focuses on the challenges to

dominant ideology, encourages educators to integrate multiple perspectives into the classroom. It also promotes the academic advancement of Blacks and other minorities in the classroom. When Black students have interests in what they are learning they will be engaged (Irvine, 1991). Engagement increases grades and standardized test scores (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Critical Race Theory supported this study in several ways. In the elementary, middle and high school focus groups most of the participants shared that they like history. Many of them echoed the same sentences in that history teaches them about their ancestors and past events. They expressed their enjoyment of learning about events relating to Blacks not only in America, but abroad as well. When I asked the participants if they could be one person from history who would it be and why, all of the participants with the exception of one young lady wanted to be someone Black. I even stated to them the person did not have to be Black and it could be anyone from history no matter the color, they still chose someone Black. This supports CRT in that minority students will be excited about learning when the individuals they learn about resemble them. Including films on race and racism is also important in the social studies classroom. Although the participants did not watch a film on race during the time period when I collected data, one of the individuals did share his thoughts about the movie *Roots* that he watched at home. He remembered the intricate details regarding the character Kunta Kinte when his foot was cut off while he hung from a tree. Utilizing film in the elementary classroom provides students with a vivid image of how race has permeated every aspect of society. Students also participated in a hands-on activity where they created images from multi colored pipe cleaners. They were excited to participate in this activity and they even asked their teacher if they could do another assignment where they could create something. Another hands-on activity involved the participants' Black History projects. This project was unique in that the criteria for students to

receive a passing grade on this assignment was 1) to choose someone who was Black, and 2) choose someone who is not normally mentioned inside or outside of the classroom. These individuals included Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark, Dr. George Franklin Grant, and Patricia Bath. Some of the research was performed in class, but the bulk of it was performed at home.

During the focus groups, the students also shared their thoughts and feelings about race and racism in past and present-day America. They engaged in educated conversations about the current government, the mistreatment of Blacks in the past, and how to move beyond racial injustices in America. Neither the elementary, middle or high school students were bored or lacked interest when discussing race. They even asked me if I was coming back again to conduct another focus group session. Ms. McDuffie even informed me the students wanted to know if I would be returning to “watch” them. The data I collected supported the findings of CRT in that Black students benefit from multiple perspectives in the social studies classroom.

Data Rejects previous research

Black youth in urban neighborhoods are more likely to witness shootings and other types of violence causing them to be at a greater risk for traumatic exposure (Caughy, Hayslett-McCall, & O’Campo, 2007). African American youth are more likely to encounter violence as a result of gangs, drugs, and alcohol compared to non-Latino Whites, Latinos, and Asians (Schubiner, Scott, & Tzelepis, 1993). Street families are lenient with their children allowing them to stay out late, drink, smoke, and encourage them to solve their problems with violence. These behaviors ultimately affect student outcomes in school. When this occurs, students perform poorly academically, and they are less engaged in the classroom. The students at WTG reject these research findings as evidenced by the focus group discussions.

All of the participants from WTG who participated in this study live in urban neighborhoods located in this medium sized city. The majority of the participants reside in one particular area in the city that at one point witnessed a steady increase in crime and homicides. These facts have not deterred them from actively participating in school and remaining vocal about racial inequalities. The research above states that Black youth residing in urban neighborhoods will more likely witness acts of homicide compared to any other racial group. With the exception of one student, none of the other participants have ever witnessed a shooting, stabbing, or act of violent crime. Even when Asia described the details of her cousin who was killed by gun violence, she did not confirm if she witnessed the shooting or if it was even in her neighborhood for that matter. These participants articulated themselves well and have a plan for their future.

In addition to the data rejecting Black youth witnessing violent crimes, the research also stated that these individuals would not perform well academically, nor would they have a plan for their future. All of the participants clearly communicated their career plans during the focus group interviews. Most of them planned to attend college after high school. Their career choices included computer science engineer, pediatrician, judge, teacher, basketball player, music producer, and the list continued. Both groups were curious about me and wanted to know about my educational background. The middle and high school participants in particular had numerous questions about me being enrolled in school. They wanted to know what a PhD was, how long does it take to graduate, and did I receive a scholarship. After answering all of their questions, one of the participants shared that she too wanted to obtain her PhD one day. The students were also knowledgeable about current events involving the political, educational, and healthcare systems. I conducted the elementary focus group on the day celebrating the 50th anniversary of

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Although the students were unable to recall the city where Dr. King was killed, they did recognize that he was killed on that day 50 years ago.

Benefits of social studies in private school

Based on the discussions, observations, and student work samples, it is evident that social studies education is needed in P-12 classrooms. Social studies not only provide students with dates and facts about historical events, it also helps students when making everyday decisions (Banks, 2001). Civic education is an essential component of social studies as it teaches students how to exercise their basic duties as American citizens (Adler & Goodman, 1986). It is crucial that Black students are able to meet both the national and global demands of this world (Banks, 2008; Chong & Kim, 2006). To meet these demands, students must also be able to communicate their thoughts and ideas in environments other than those where they are normally accustomed. To foster these successes, educators must integrate multiple perspectives on historical content to encourage students' interest to create positive experiences in their social studies classrooms (Marcus & Stoddard, 2009). Unlike public schools, private school educators and students have the autonomy to engage in deep conversations about race and race relations. This was my experience at WTG as I collected data.

As a member of the National Association of Independent Schools, WTG operates entirely outside the rules and regulations of the school district in which it is situated. With this exclusivity, students follow a unique mission that fits the needs of the population. For example, the students are required to wear school uniforms which is relatively normal for private schools. Also, every student must relinquish their cell phones to the Dean of students at the beginning of the day. During one of my visits, I noticed that the Dean of students walked into Ms.

McDuffie's classroom with a Ziploc bag and inside were several cell phones. After the dismissal, I asked Ms. McDuffie why the Dean had all of the students' cell phones. She explained to me that administration collects all students' cell phones at the beginning of the day to avoid problems. Ms. McDuffie stated it not only eliminated issues and possible confusion among the students, it also allowed them to focus more in class. These are just two examples of how private schools can use their independence to foster a positive and productive learning environment. Moreover, when examining the social studies discipline, private schools can really use their independence to step outside the boundaries. As I listened during the face-to-face observations, Ms. McDuffie engaged in conversations about race, the government, and religion that as a former public school teacher I would more than likely would not have addressed. Ms. McDuffie freely shared her opinions regarding current and controversial topics and allowed the students to express themselves. She never shied away from discussing these topics with her fifth grade students and based on their responses, they were comfortable in engaging in this dialogue within the classroom. While I did not conduct observations in the middle or high school social studies classrooms, based on the comments from the students, I inferred that they too were comfortable discussing race, race relations, and other controversial topics in the classroom. An example of this was noted in Malik's comments when he stated that Mr. Godfrey tells them what's really real and he does not sugar coat anything for them. These are precisely the conversations that should be occurring in social studies classrooms. Topics on race and race relations are not easy conversations to have, but they must be had (King, 2014). Racial dialogue in the social studies classroom is the ideal environment, not only so students can express themselves, but also so educators can exercise their wisdom and knowledge about the topic to inform students what they should and should not do if confronted with racism. Private schools

must use this leverage to educate students in the social studies classroom about local, national, and world issues beyond what the textbook outlines.

Positionality after the study

As a student myself, I also loved social studies. My absolute favorite disciplines in social studies has always been history and geography. I was excited to learn about history, primarily Black history and states. I recall being the only student in my elementary class who could recite the capitals of all 50 states. I also remember in middle school my teachers always asking me to be the group leader for a history project. As I previously mentioned in Chapter 1, I developed a deep love for Black history when I was required to enroll in African American history courses at Clark Atlanta University. Learning about Black history and the contributions that Blacks made, not only in America but worldwide, intensified my desire to learn more. Fast forwarding to my role as an elementary educator, I wanted my students to have the same love for social studies as I did. I was strategic in that I integrated other subjects into social studies to meet the demands of standardized testing. My students were not just coloring pictures of states, but they were comparing and contrasting different states, reading about historical events, notating the main idea and supporting sentences, and learning about the crops in Georgia and the history behind Black individuals who labored day and night to make those crops grow. With the support of administration and my parents, I integrated lessons on multiple perspectives and my students were thoroughly excited to learn this information. It is important that students learn about all aspects of history, but it is a greater necessity they learn about their history.

As I conducted research at WTG, I was surprised to learn how knowledgeable the students were about historical and current events. I was even more surprised to learn that they

cared about the direction in which the country is headed, and that they liked to learn about history. Often times, when I talk to young people, mainly family members, they express their dislike for history. Contrarily, not the students at WTG, they liked learning about history. Based on the data, this like for history stems from the integration of multiple perspectives and discussing other Black individuals from history. I made sure not to ask leading questions from the participants as I did not want to skew the data. Whenever I asked them a question about social studies or historical people, they always responded with someone or something Black. This told me two things, 1) the participants were regularly engaged in conversations about Blacks or African Americans during their social studies instruction, and 2) as the previous research noted, Black students will be interested to learn about history when they are learning about other Black people and events.

After this research study, I am even more convinced of the need to integrate lessons on multiple perspectives in the social studies classroom. These participants have now challenged me, as a scholar, to incorporate lessons on multiple perspectives in my teacher education courses. I will engage my student teachers in activities that teaches them how to be sensitive to the needs of all racial backgrounds, and teach social studies lessons that are inclusive of every learner. As a researcher, I will continue to conduct studies that go beyond teaching from the textbook and discuss ways to navigate through the curriculum so students can be productive citizens in society.

Implications

Implications for teacher educator programs

Although this study was conducted at a private school, many student teachers enrolled in a certified initial-teacher educator program will teach in public schools. It is important that teacher education programs focus their teaching on ways student teachers can incorporate multiple perspectives into their classroom. Not only should student teachers participate in hands-on projects involving multiple perspectives activities, they should also engage in dialogue on race and race relations. These conversations should be both small group and whole group centered. Social studies education is the essence of students learning about current and historical events (Fitchett, Heafner, & Lambert, 2017). Black students account for one of the largest student population groups in public schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), therefore it is necessary for student teachers to practice teaching from a multiple perspectives approach.

Implications for standards

Learning standards are a concise and written description of what students are expected to know and do at the completion of each grade level. Depending on the state, the standards differ by content. When it comes to social studies, it is critical that policy-makers include standards where students are actively engaged in the content. For many states, whatever content is covered in the standards will be included on that state's standardized assessment. Therefore, it is necessary that the content from the standardized assessments is representative of different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic classes. It is also important that educators are granted the freedom to teach depending on their student population (Margolis, Meese, & Doring, 2016). As long as

their lessons are supported by the state standards, they should be permitted to teach from a multiple perspectives viewpoint. Allowing this will increase students' interest when learning about history, just as it did for the students at WTG.

Implications for public schools

When student standards are reflective of the entire student population, educators can incorporate different methods of teaching in their classroom. While private school teachers have more freedom to discuss racial topics, public school teachers have to be careful when teaching regarding race. However, it is the educators' responsibility to develop creative lessons that will keep students interested. Although public school teachers are confined by stricter policies, they can still teach so that Black students feel included when reading history textbooks. There are numerous ways teachers in public schools can do this and still follow the standards. These include teaching with film (Russell & Waters, 2013), inviting guest speakers to the class, and virtual tours (Quintana, Sagredo, & Lytras, 2017). It is important that private schools discuss topics on race and race relations, but it is equally vital that public schools engage in these conversations as well.

Future Studies

Embarking on this study, I did not think I would gain so much information from a group of young students. I was impressed and delighted to learn their level of awareness regarding social issues. Even more so, it gave me assurance that this generation of young Black people will make good judgements when it comes to political and social issues. Though the crux of this study focused on Black fifth grade students' perceptions of social studies, I would like to extend

this research to gather the experiences of Black middle and high school students as well. As noted from the focus group with the middle and high school participants, these students have more background knowledge regarding topics on race and race relations. Their conversations on racial discourse varied from the examples they provided to personal experiences they encountered. Just as I did with the fifth grade participants, I would also like to conduct observations and collect student work samples from this group.

I would also like to explore the sociological aspect as well to identify how social studies and sociology intertwine. While this will require further thought process, I would like to understand specifically how a students' culture and social relationships affect their thoughts, attitudes, and experiences of social studies. Additionally, the purpose of this research would be to highlight how these perceptions transfer to the social studies classroom, and identify how students respond to current and historical events based on society, culture, and social relationships they have encountered.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study of Black fifth grade students' perceptions of social studies facilitated my understanding of the phenomenon. Through focus groups, observations, and student work samples, I obtained a wealth of information. I am confident that this information will benefit the field not only as a whole, but specifically elementary social studies. While few research studies have focused on elementary social studies, the number of studies that examine Black students is even smaller. We must both teach lessons on multiple perspectives, as well as conduct more studies from the primary grades which is where learning begins. The Black fifth grade students in this study revealed that they too have a voice and it is time they are heard.

APPENDIX A:
UCF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
FWA00000351, IRB00001138
To: **Irenea Walker and Co-PIs: Carolyn W. Hopp, William**
B. Russell Date: **February 26, 2018**

Dear Researcher:

On the IRB approved the following human participant research until 02/25/2019 inclusive:

Type of UCF Initial Review Submission Form
Review: Expedited Review
Project Title: A phenomenological study of Black fifth grade
students' perceptions of social studies
Investigator: Irenea Walker
IRB Number: SBE-18-13726
Funding
Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

The scientific merit of the research was considered during the IRB review. The Continuing Review Application must be submitted 30 days prior to the expiration date for studies that were previously expedited, and 60 days prior to the expiration date for research that was previously reviewed at a convened meeting. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol, methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. A Modification Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at <https://iris.research.ucf.edu>. If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 02/25/2019, approval of this research expires on that date. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required. The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Participants or their representatives must receive a copy of the consent form(s). All data, including signed consent forms if applicable, must be retained and secured per protocol for a minimum of five years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained and secured per protocol.

Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel. In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

This letter is signed by:

Page 1 of 2

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gillian Morien". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent vertical stroke at the end.

Signature applied by Gillian Morien on 02/26/2018 10:03:24 PM EST

Designated Reviewer

APPENDIX B:
INFORMED CONSENT – ELEMENTARY



Title of research study: A phenomenological study of Black fifth grade students' perceptions of social studies

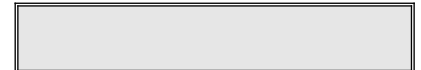
Informed Consent

Principal Investigator(s): Irene Walker

Co-Investigators: Carolyn Hopp, PhD
William Russell, PhD

Faculty Supervisor: William Russell, PhD

Investigational Site(s): Bridge To Independence Private School



IRB Approval Date

Document Revision Date: December 11, 2017

How to Return this Consent Form:

You are provided with two copies of this consent form. If you give consent for your child to participate in the research, please sign one copy and return it to the researcher or teacher and keep the other copy for your records.

Why is my child being invited to take part in a research study?

Your child is being invited to take part in a research study because he or she is an elementary student at Bridge To Independence Private School. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being asked to allow your child to take part in a research study which will include about 5-30 students at Bridge To Independence Private School. The person doing this research is Irene Walker from the University of Central Florida of the College of Education and Human Performance. Because the researcher is a graduate student she is being guided by Dr. Carolyn Hopp and Dr. William Russell, UCF faculty advisors in the College of Education and Human Performance.

What should I know about a research study?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not your child takes part is up to you.
- You can choose not to allow your child to take part.
- You can agree to let your child take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you or your child.

- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt your child, talk to the research team at (407) 823-5108 or Dr. Carolyn Hopp, Faculty Supervisor, School of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership at (407) 823-0392 or by email at carolyn.hopp@ucf.edu or Dr. William Russell, Faculty Supervisor, School of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership at (407) 823- 4717 or by email at Russell@ucf.edu.

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). You may talk to them at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your child’s rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Why is this research being done?

The problem addressed in this study is the lack of Black elementary students’ knowledge and interest of the social studies content. Hopefully by increasing Black elementary students’ awareness and interest in social studies, it will also increase their academic performance in social studies related subjects, and help students develop into responsible active citizens. It is important that social studies lessons are focused on experiences that allow Black students to identify with individuals who resemble them from all aspects of life.

How long will the research last?

We expect that your child will be in this research study two days a week for 6 weeks. The student will participant in the focus group sessions twice, the first and last week during the study. The focus group will be between 30 minutes and an hour. The total time for the focus group sessions will be 2 hours. The virtual and face-to-face observations will occur during class time. Both observations will occur for one hour during social studies instruction. The total time for both the virtual and face-to-face observations will be 12 hours over the span of 6 weeks. The student work samples will be observed during school hours in a separate room designated by the school administrators. Only the researchers will observe the student work samples, the students will not be in attendance during this time.

How many people will be studied?

We expect about 25 children here will be in this research study out of 30 people in the entire study nationally.

What happens if I say yes, I want my child to be in this research?

The participants are Black fifth grade students during social studies instruction. This study involves fifth grade elementary students who will participate in face-to-face and virtual classroom observations, 5 to 10 students for the focus groups, and the collection of student work samples. A virtual observation consists of observing the students and the teacher during instruction. This observation will occur by placing a computer inside the classroom. The researcher will then go to a different location in the school building and observe the students and the teacher on another computer. The researcher will also observe the students through a face-to-face observation during their regularly scheduled social studies instruction time. Since the researcher will be at the site twice a week for 6 weeks, one day will include a virtual observation and one day will include a face-to-face observation. Both observations will occur during class time. The focus group will occur during the scheduled time for social studies instruction. The student will participate in the focus group sessions twice, the first and last week during the study. The focus group will be between 30 minutes and an hour. The total time for the focus group sessions will be 2 hours. The student work samples will include data collection of social studies' projects, and classroom and homework assignments. The student work samples will be observed twice a week. Data will be transcribed for quotes, phrases, or words that will be extracted from the focus group. Once transcribed, the researcher will use pseudonyms for the participants to protect the confidentiality of the individuals. Once the transcriptions are chronologically organized, the researcher will store the information in a binder that will remain with the researcher.

Audio or video taping:

Your child will be audiotaped during this study. The audiotaping will occur during the virtual observation and the focus group sessions. If you do not want your child to be audiotaped, your child will not be able to be in the study. Discuss this with the researcher or a research team member. If your child is audiotaped, the tape will be kept in a locked, safe place. The tape will be erased or destroyed on or before August 1, 2018.

Your child will be videotaped during this study. The videotaping will occur during the virtual observation. If you do not want your child to be videotaped, your child will not be able to be in the study. Discuss this with the researcher or a research team member. If your child is videotaped, the tape will be kept in a locked, safe place. The tape will be erased or destroyed on or before August 1, 2018.

What happens if I do not want my child to be in this research?

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You can decide to allow your child to participate or not to participate. If you do not wish to have your child participate, they will not lose any course credit.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

You can have your child leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you or your child.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your child's personal information, including research study and medical records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your child's information include the IRB and other representatives of this organization.

Your signature documents your permission for the named child to take part in this research.

Printed name of child

Signature of parent

Date

Printed name of parent

APPENDIX C:
INFORMED CONSENT – MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL



Title of research study: A phenomenological study of Black fifth grade students' perceptions of social studies

Informed Consent

Principal Investigator(s): Irene Walker

Co-Investigators: Carolyn Hopp, PhD
William Russell, PhD

Faculty Supervisor: William Russell, PhD

Investigational Site(s): Bridge To Independence Private School

IRB Approval Date

Document Revision Date: December 11, 2017

How to Return this Consent Form:

You are provided with two copies of this consent form. If you give consent for your child to participate in the research, please sign one copy and return it to the researcher or teacher and keep the other copy for your records.

Why is my child being invited to take part in a research study?

Your child is being invited to take part in a research study because he or she is a middle or high school student at Bridge To Independence Private School. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being asked to allow your child to take part in a research study which will include about 5-30 students at Bridge To Independence Private School. The person doing this research is Irene Walker from the University of Central Florida of the College of Education and Human Performance. Because the researcher is a graduate student she is being guided by Dr. Carolyn Hopp and Dr. William Russell, UCF faculty advisors in the College of Education and Human Performance.

What should I know about a research study?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not your child takes part is up to you.
- You can choose not to allow your child to take part.

- You can agree to let your child take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you or your child.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt your child, talk to the research team at (407) 823-5108 or Dr. Carolyn Hopp, Faculty Supervisor, School of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership at (407) 823-0392 or by email at carolyn.hopp@ucf.edu or Dr. William Russell, Faculty Supervisor, School of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership at (407) 823- 4717 or by email at Russell@ucf.edu.

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). You may talk to them at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your child’s rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Why is this research being done?

The problem addressed in this study is the lack of Black elementary students’ knowledge and interest of the social studies content. Hopefully by increasing Black elementary students’ awareness and interest in social studies, it will also increase their academic performance in social studies related subjects, and help students develop into responsible active citizens. It is important that social studies lessons are focused on experiences that allow Black students to identify with individuals who resemble them from all aspects of life.

How long will the research last?

We expect that your child will be in this research study one day a week for 2-3 weeks. The student will participant in the focus group sessions twice, the first and last week during the study. The focus group will be between 30 minutes and an hour. The total time for the focus group sessions will be 2 hours.

How many people will be studied?

We expect about 10 children here will be in this research study out of 15 people in the entire study nationally.

What happens if I say yes, I want my child to be in this research?

Your child is being asked to participant in a focus group about Black students’ perceptions in social studies. The participants are Black middle and high school students during social studies instruction. This study will consist of 10 to 15 middle and high school students for a focus group. The focus group will occur during the scheduled

time for social studies instruction. Data will be transcribed for quotes, phrases, or words that will be extracted from the focus group. Once transcribed, the researcher will use pseudonyms for the participants to protect the confidentiality of the individuals. Once the transcriptions are chronologically organized, the researcher will store the information in a binder that will remain with the researcher.

Audio or video taping:

Your child will be audiotaped during this study. If you do not want your child to be audiotaped, your child will not be able to participate in the study. Discuss this with the researcher or a research team member. If your child is audiotaped, the tape will be kept in a locked, safe place. The tape will be erased or destroyed on or before August 1, 2018.

What happens if I do not want my child to be in this research?

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You can decide to allow your child to participate or not to participate. If you do not wish to have your child participate, they will not lose any course credit.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

You can have your child leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you or your child.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your child's personal information, including research study and medical records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your child's information include the IRB and other representatives of this organization.

Your signature documents your permission for the named child to take part in this research.

Printed name of child

Signature of parent

Date

Printed name of parent

APPENDIX D:
FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

The following questions will be asked of the participants during the focus group:

1. Tell me something about yourself?
2. What do you like about school?
3. What is your favorite subject in school? Why?
4. What are your experiences during social studies instruction?
5. Do you like social studies? Why or why not?
6. Do you like history? Why or why not?
7. If you could be one person from history, who would you be? Why?
8. Can you tell me about historical events that occurred dealing with Black Americans? If so, what can you tell me?
9. If you could choose to be one historical Black person who would you be? Why?
10. Tell me about your Black history projects you completed in February?

APPENDIX E:
CODES TO PATTERNS

5/15/18

Codes to Patterns

1. Learn about social studies - Descriptive Code
2. Patricia Bass - In Vivo Code
3. Dr. Charles Drew - In Vivo Code
4. George Franklin - In Vivo Code
5. Kenneth Clark - In Vivo Code
6. Juan E. Gilbert - In Vivo Code
7. Mamie Clark - In Vivo Code
8. Kinda Interesting - In Vivo Code
9. Slavery - In Vivo Code / Emotion Code / Values Code
0. Blacks & No Credit - Process Code / Emotion Code
1. I'm Black - ^{Emotion} In Vivo Code / In Vivo Code
2. Learning the past - Process Code / Values Code
3. Me & My Mom - Process Code / In Vivo Code
4. Treated Badly - ^{Emotion} Process Code
5. Blacks suffered - ^{Emotion} Descriptive Code / Values Code
6. Liked learning about Black history - Values Code

APPENDIX E:

(5/13/18)

Codes to Patterns

17. Exciting - Emotion Code

18. MLK - Values Code / In Vivo Code

19. Jackie Robinson - In Vivo Code

20. Mary McLeod Bethune - In Vivo Code

21. Barack Obama - In Vivo Code

22. Trump messed it up - Emotion Code /
Process Code / Descriptive Code

23. Abraham Lincoln - In Vivo Code

24. Stopped the violence - Emotion Code

25. Zora Neale Hurston Festival - Descriptive Code

26. Boy Buscott - Values Code / Process Code

27. African American / Black Historians - Values Code /
Process Code

28. ^{World} ~~Life~~ History - In Vivo Code

29. What's Really Real - Emotion Code / Process Code

30. Black Lives Matter - Emotion Code /
Process Code

31. Power - In Vivo Code / Emotion Code

32. Untruthful about history - Process Code /
Descriptive Code / Emotion Code

Codes to Patterns

33. Inaccurate about slavery - Values Code/Emotion Code
34. Marcus Garvey - In Vivo Code
35. Rosa Parks - In Vivo Code
36. That's Just Racist - In Vivo Code/Emotion Code
37. Kanye West Racist - In Vivo Code
38. This is a democracy - Process Code/Descriptive Code
39. What is he doing Wrong (D.T.) - In Vivo Code
40. Harriett Tubman - In Vivo Code
41. Ocoee Massacre - Values Code/Emotion Code
42. Everyone is not racist - Process Code/Descriptive Code
43. Bernie Sanders - In Vivo Code
51. Engaged - Process Code
52. Frederick Douglass - In Vivo Code
53. Equality for the poor - Values/Descriptors
54. Trying To Get Engaged - Process Code
55. Not interested - Process Code

APPENDIX F:
CODE TYPE

5/15/18

Code Type

~~Descriptive~~

- Descriptors - learn @ s.s., Z. N. H. Festival, This is a democracy, untruthful @ history, everyone is not racist, Trump messed it up, Failed tests @ states, ~~excited~~ @ hands-on activity, equality for the poor, trying to get engaged

- In Vivo - Patricia Bass, Dr. Charles Drew, George Franklin, Kenneth Clark, Juan E. Gilbert, Mamie Clark, kinda interesting, slavery, I'm Black, Me + My Mom, MLK, Jackie Robinson, Mary McLeod Bethune, Barack Obama, Abraham Lincoln, World History, Power, Marcus Garvey, Rosa Parks, That's Just Racist, Kanye West Racist, What is he doing wrong (DT), Harriet Tubman, Bernie Sanders, ~~In Vivo edit~~ A redneck, Indians, Frederick Douglass

BLK PPI in history

- Processes - Blacks + No Credits, learning the past, Me + My Mom, Boy Buscott, A.A./Black Historians, What's Really Real, BLM, untruthful @ history, this is a democracy, everyone is not racist, Trump messed it up, interested to learn @ states, students not engaged, underbinty, engaged, trying to get engaged, Not interested

5/15/18

Code Type

- Emotions - Slavery, Blacks & No credit, treated badly, Blacks suffered, exciting, Trump messed it up, stopped the violence, What's Really real, BLM, power, untruthful @ history, inaccurate @ Slavery, that's just racist, Ocoee Massacre
- Values - Slavery, Blacks suffered, liked learning @ Black history, Boy Buscott, A.A./Blacks Historians, inaccurate @ Slavery, Ocoee Massacre, learning the past, MLK, equality for the poor

APPENDIX G:
CLUSTERS

5/18/18

Clusters

~~Theme 1: I'm Black and I Need to Know My Past (Identity)~~

Cluster 1: Z. N.H. Festival, Patricia Bath, Dr. Charles Drew, Dr. George Franklin, Dr. Kenneth Clark, Dr. Mamie Clark, Juan E. Gilbert, "I'm Black," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Jackie Robinson, Mary McLeod Bethune, Barack Obama, power, Marcus Garvey, Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Black PPI in history, Blacks suffered, liked learning @ Black history, slavery, Boy Buscott, learn about social studies, engaged, learning about the past, treated badly, Blacks & No Credit, "exciting", Ocoee Massacre

~~Theme 2: What's Really Real (Need to be informed)~~ ^{cultural knowledge} _{2000 miss}

Cluster 2: This is a democracy, everyone is not racist, equality for the poor, Abraham Lincoln, Bernie Sanders, BLM, What's Really Real

~~Theme 3: The Injustices of my past and Present~~ ^{the (Impact of... on Identity)}

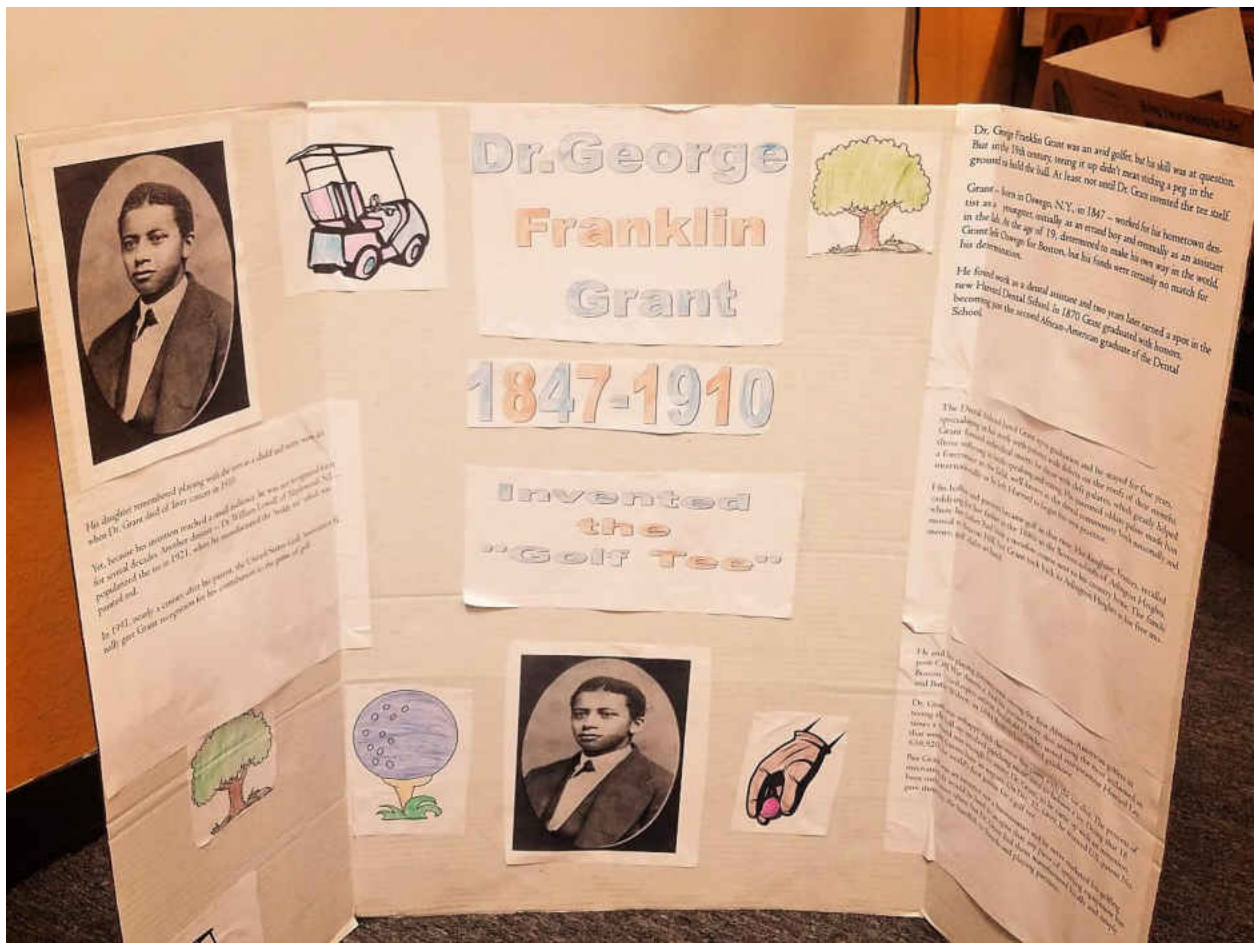
Cluster 3: Untruthful about history, Trump messed it up, That's just racist, Kanye West racist, What is he doing wrong (Donald Trump), A redneck, inaccurate about slavery

* Note: Her name is believed to be Patricia Bath, not Bass

APPENDIX H:
ARTWORK 1: LARRY



APPENDIX I:
BLACK HISTORY PROJECT 1: LARRY



APPENDIX J:
ASSIGNMENT 1: LARRY

#A family of Black People taking a picture

#Kids playing Jump rope on the sidewalk
Black Kids

#People standing in the road walking pass
#Neighborhood POOR

#No White People in a house beating a black


APPENDIX K:
ARTWORK 2: TERRANCE



APPENDIX L:
BLACK HISTORY PROJECT 2: TERRANCE

AND GILBERT

JUAN E GILBERT





FEB 27, 1969

[REDACTED]

5TH

October 8, 2013
 2013 Auburn University Black Graduate and Professional Student Association creates the Juan E. Gilbert, Ph.D. Distinguished Lecture Series
 2013, Named an Idea Maker: Ten Tech Innovators in 2013 by the Chronicle of Higher Education
 2013, ACM Richard A. Tapia Achievement Award
 Chairman's Awards for Advancement in Accessibility
 2012, Named one of the 2012 The Root 100 Black Influencers and Achievers
 2012, National Center for Women in IT (NCWIT) Undergraduate Research Mentoring Award
 2012, Hamilton, Ohio Becker T. Washington Community Center Academic Excellence Award
 2012, Miami University Bishop Medal Alumni Award
 2012, February 2013 Named "Dr. Juan Gilbert Month" by Hamilton, Ohio City Council
 2012, Recipient of the Hamilton, Ohio City Council Key to the City
 2012, Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) District III Grand Award Winner for all-accessible electronic voting system
 2011, "Blackboard is Award for Best Software in Education"

Background

MIAMI

CLEMSON

APPENDIX M:
ASSIGNMENT 2: TERRANCE

APRIL - 14 - 18

jump rope

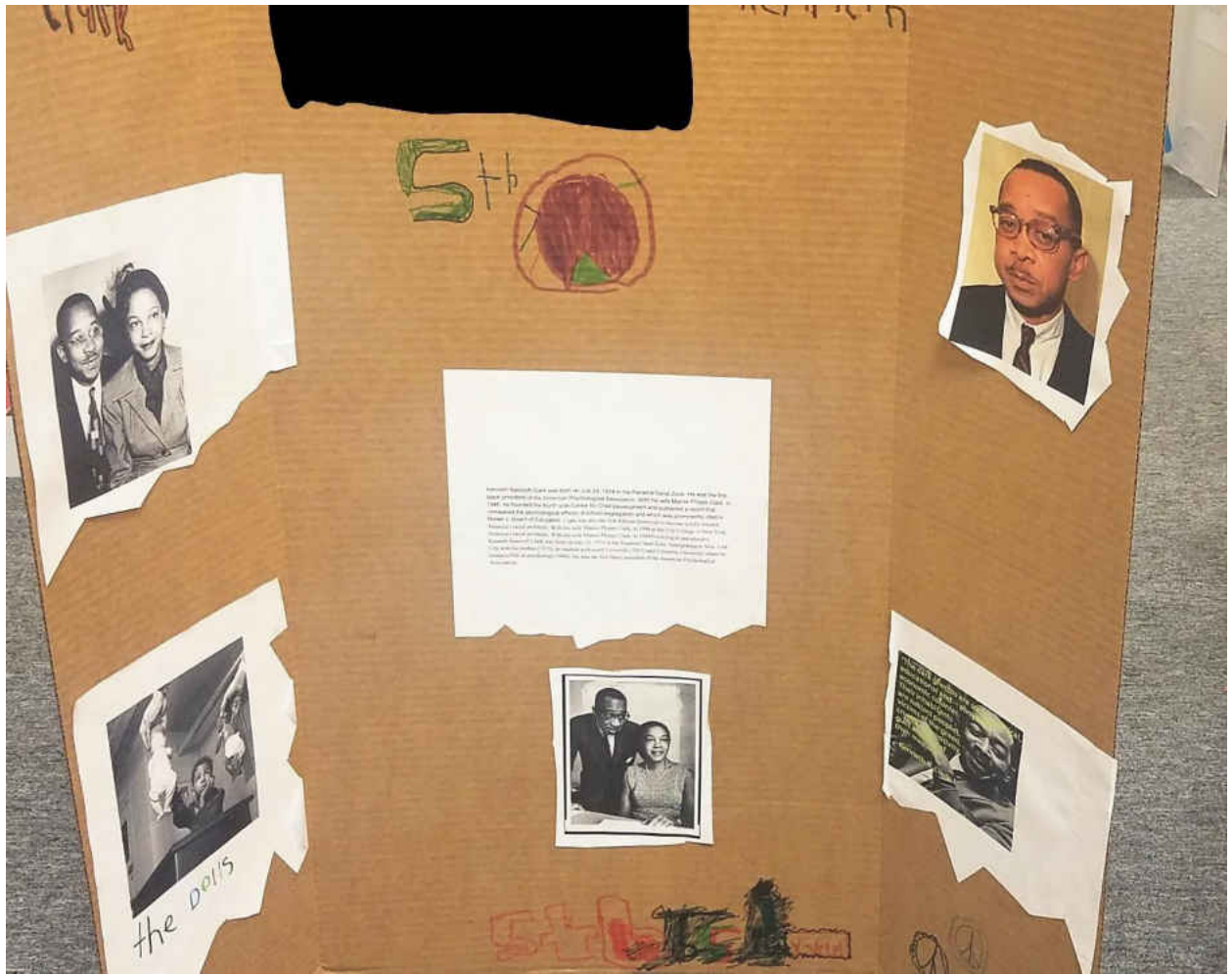
Black lives matter

slavery and poor

APPENDIX N:
ARTWORK 3: TYRONE



APPENDIX O:
BLACK HISTORY PROJECT 3: TYRONE



APPENDIX P:
ARTWORK 4: ERIKA



APPENDIX Q:
BLACK HISTORY PROJECT 4: ERIKA

5th Grade

Patricia Bath

Life Achievements

- First African American female Physician
- First Female Physician to receive a patent for medical inventions related to cataract surgery (Laser phaco Probe)
- Probe revolutionized the industry in the medical field for eye treatment

Family Members

- Rupert Bath - Father
- Gladys Bath - Mother
- Benny J. Primm - Honor School

Born: November 4, 1942
Died: Still Living

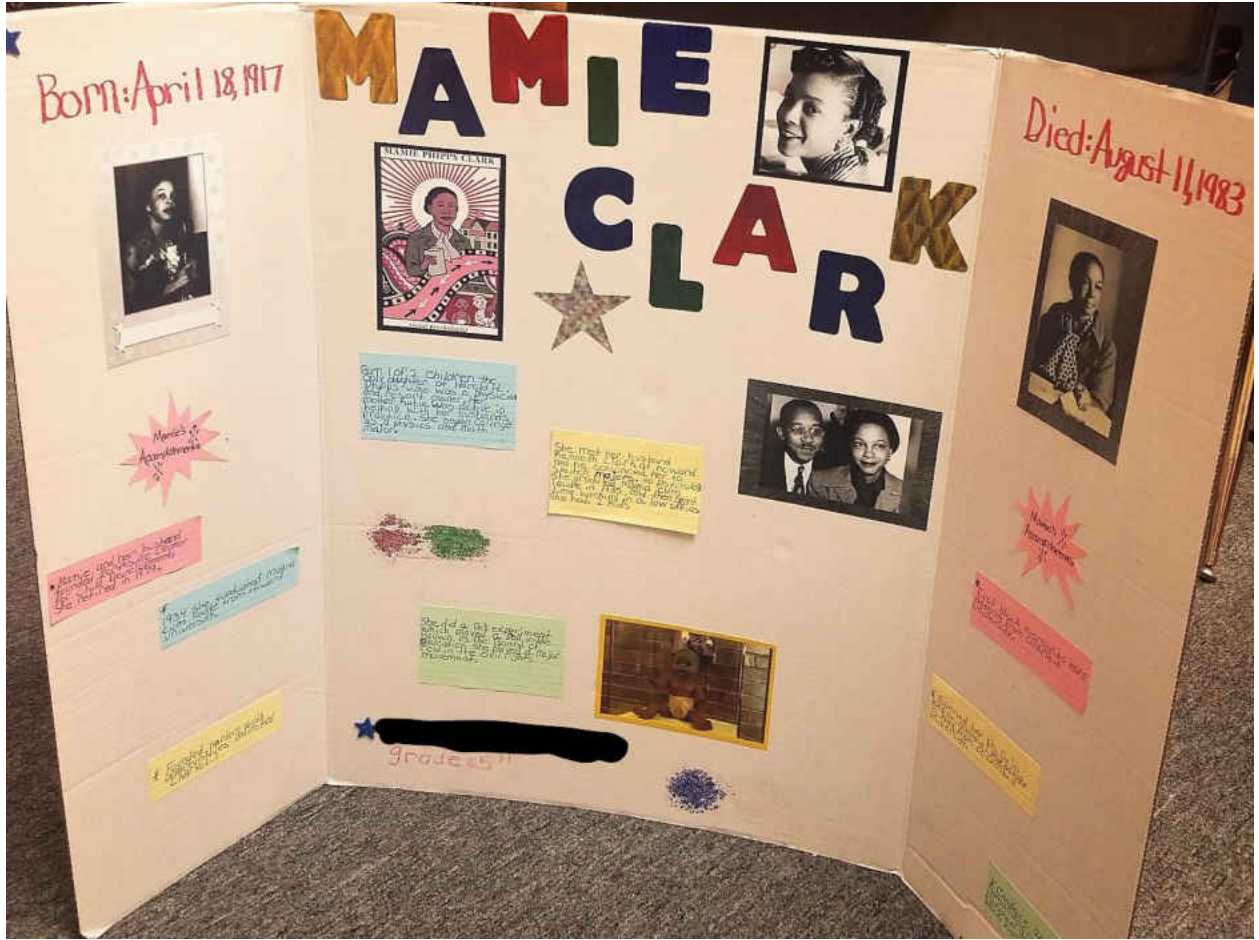
MAKES THE BLIND SEE
LASERPHACO PROBE

MAKES THE BLIND SEE

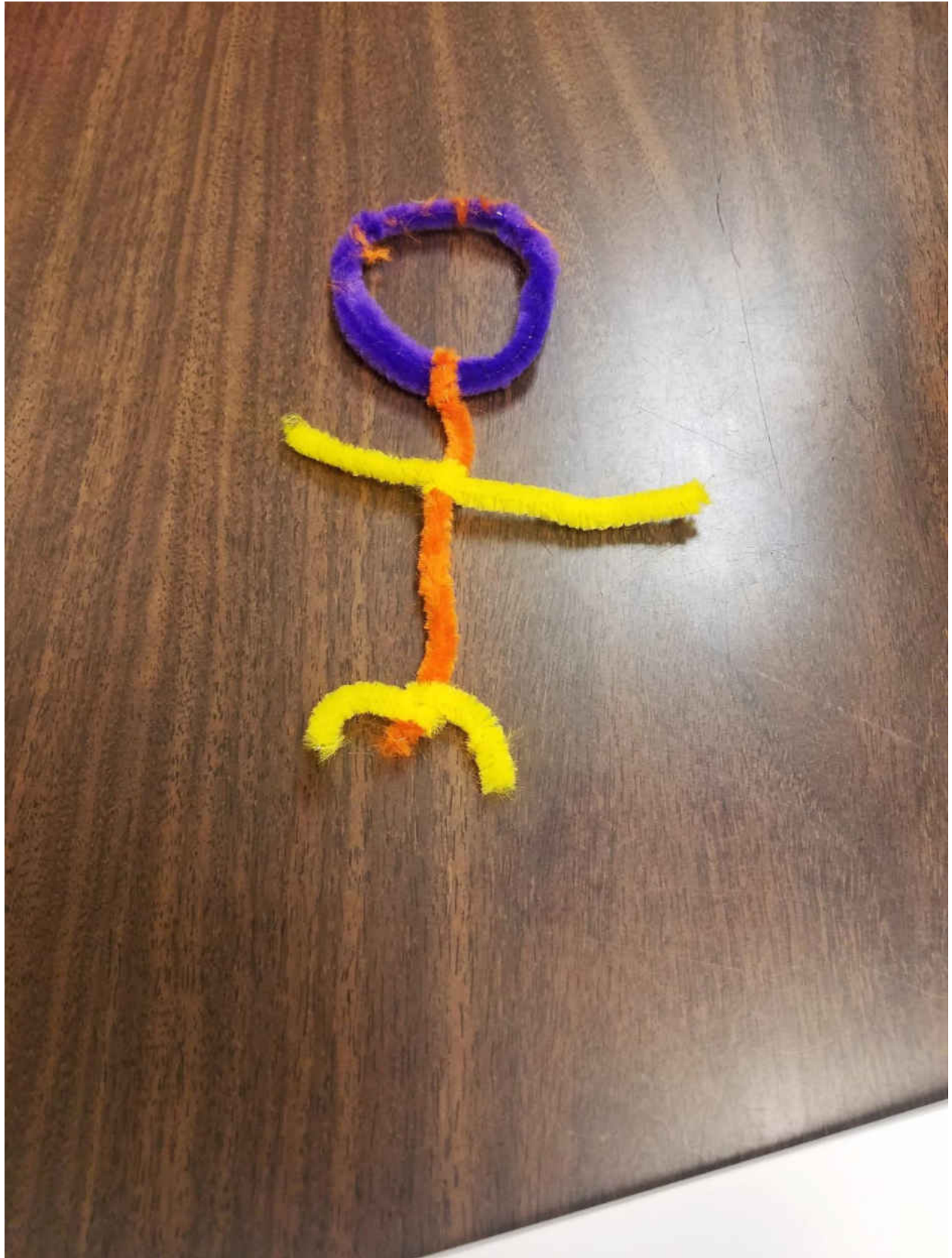
APPENDIX R:
ARTWORK 5: DIAMOND



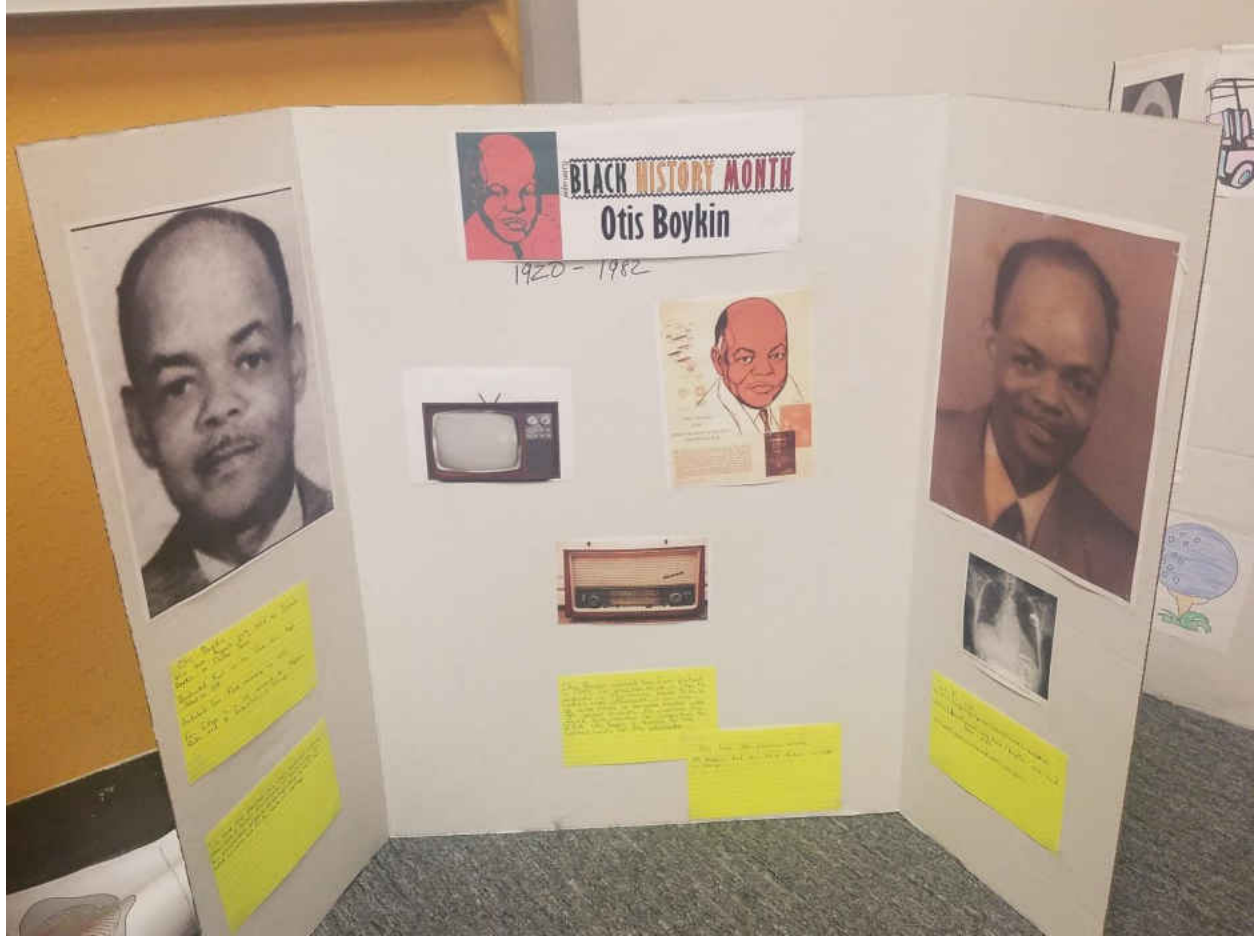
APPENDIX S:
BLACK HISTORY PROJECT 5: DIAMOND



APPENDIX T:
ARTWORK 6: HEAVEN



APPENDIX U:
BLACK HISTORY PROJECT 6: HEAVEN

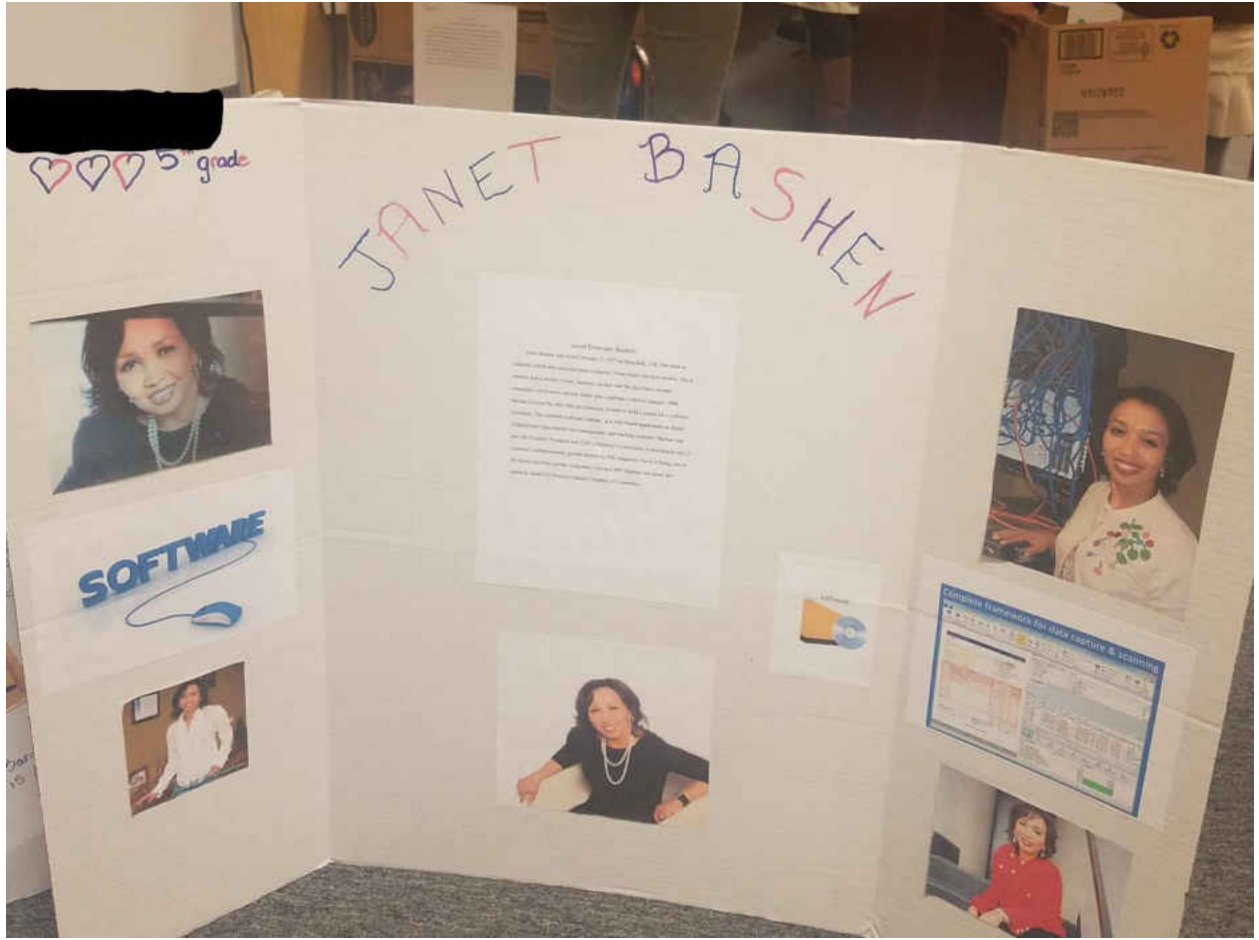


APPENDIX V:
ASSIGNMENT 3: TANESHA

hashtag people walking by stairs
hashtag a man getting beat up by another
hashtag people that escaped slavery
hashtag kids playing jump rope



APPENDIX W:
BLACK HISTORY PROJECT 7: TANESHA



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